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THE

MERRIE DAYS OF ENGLAND

Sketches of the Olden Time.

BY EDWARD McDERMOTT.

ILLUSTRATED WITH TWENTY ENGRAVINGS,
FROM DRAWINGS BY JOSEPH NASH, GEORGE THOMAS, BIRKET FOSTER,
AND EDWARD CORBOULD.

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. . . I'm an old man,
And love the good old ways.
Southey.

HOW pleaſant are the ideas which are aſſociated with "the merrie days of England;" and how ſtrikingly do they contraſt with our experience of the preſent time! Turn aſide for a moment from the records of the miſdeeds of haughty Plantagenets; the deſolating wars of York and Lancaſter; the terrible misfortunes of the Stuarts; the ſanguinary conflicts of Towton, of Boſworth, or of Naſeby; and even amid theſe darker ſcenes of our hiſtory, abundant evidence is afforded that England was in truth "a merrie England."

Our fathers fought manfully and earneſtly at Creſſy and at Agincourt; they worked well and nobly as they piled up caſtle, and abbey, and groined cathedral; but the ſtrife for exiſtence was not so keen, nor the ſtruggle of competition ſo fierce then as now. At break of dawn and cloſe of day, at the early bluſh of May-tide, amid the bleak winter of Chriſtmas, there were heard from the hill-ſides and valleys of old England the joyous ſhouts of a contented and a happy people. The peaſant in his humble abode, the young trading Guilds of the towns, the noble in his manſion, the baron in his caſtle, the monk in his abbey, and the courtier that applauded the king's jeſter in the palace, were gay and light-hearted;—men laughed and women ſmiled, and minſtrels ſang, and all fared well in "the merrie days of England."

Pale ſtudents, deeply read in their Hallams, their Humes, and their Rapins, tell us that there were no railways, no electric telegraphs, and no leviathan ſteamers in the "olden time." Alas! we know it; and we read too that there were then no commercial panics, nor monſter workhouſes, nor ſome other of the types of modern times, and products of this iron and progreſſive age. And yet our fathers lived

and died, and taught their children how to enjoy life and meet death, as befitted the "free-born Engliſhman."

We have culled from poets and writers who lived in the "Olden time," and from a few of our own day who have ſtudied the paſt, ſome deſcriptions of the ſports, the paſtimes, and the occupations of our forefathers, even when living amid wars and rumours of wars, civil diſſenſions, and much perhaps that might well have been ſpared for hiſtory to record. Our pen and pencil "ſketches of the olden times" are not ſubmitted as finiſhed pictures; our object is merely to preſent to this utilitarian age ſome features of the "merrie days" of our anceſtors.

E. McD.

THE TERRACE, CAMBERWELL.

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THE

MERRIE DAYS OF ENGLAND.

COTTAGE HOMES.

THERE are few, if any ſcenes in England which are more ſuggeſtive of the "merrie" days of the paſt, than the pictureſque villages which are to be met with in every part of our country. Not only do they convey to the mind pleaſant pictures of rural life, of healthy occupations, of ſimple pleaſures, and contented minds; but they carry us back in imagination to the days when poets ſang the charms of peaſant life, and Spenſer told the loves of ſhepherdeſſes, and the wooings of "gentle herdſmen." Who has not been charmed with the ſight of an Engliſh village, neſtling amid the

foliage of ſome thickly wooded ſpot; its humble ſpire pointing with tapering finger to the clear blue heaven above; its ancient church marking the hallowed ſpot beneath whoſe bright green turf,

The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

As we look upon theſe "God's acres," and their "mouldering heaps," we reflect that many a time and oft the occupants of thoſe "narrow cells" had wended their way along thoſe graſſ-grown walks, when the village chime ſummoned them to their devout worſhip; or when, at the ſolemn tolling of the bell, ſtalwart men ſobbed, and maidens wept, as they bade the laſt adieu to thoſe alike "to fortune and to fame unknown."

It is ſuch a village church that Mrs. Hemans deſcribes in her graceful ſonnet:

Crowning a flowery slope, it stood alone
In gracious sanctity. A bright rill wound,
Caressingly, about the holy ground;
And warbled with a never-dying tone
Amidst the tombs. A hue of ages gone
Seem'd, from that ivied porch, that solemn gleam,
Of tower and cross, pale-quivering on the stream,
O'er all th' ancestral woodlands to be thrown—
And something yet more deep. The air was fraught
With noble memories, whispering many a thought
Of England's fathers: loftily serene,
They that had toil'd, watch'd, struggled to secure,
Within such fabrics, worship free and pure,
Reign'd there, the o'ershadowing spirit of the scene.

THE COTTAGE HOMES OF ENGLAND.

And of the humble dwellings that cluſter round that venerable fabric, the ſame writer has ſaid :—

The cottage homes of England!
By thousands on her plains,
They are smiling o'er the silvery brooks,
And round the hamlet fanes.
Through glowing orchards forth they peep,
Each from its nook of leaves;
And fearless there the lowly sleep,
As the birds beneath their eaves.

Theſe cottage homes, and the ivy-mantled tower of the village church, have not greatly changed by faſhion or by time. They were reared in the days of "merrie England," and are not yet altogether ſupplanted by model cottages. Darwin's pretty sketch of a ruſtic dwelling in the laſt century, compared with the deſcription of Miſs Mitford of the prettieſt cottage in "Our Village," will ſhow how little has been the change which a century has made.

The rush-thatch'd cottage on the purple moor,
Where ruddy children frolic round the door;
The moss-grown antlers of the aged oak,
The shaggy locks that fringe the colt unbroke;
The bearded goat, with nimble eyes that glare
Through the long tissue of his hoary hair,
As with quick foot he climbs some ruined wall,
And crops the ivy which prevents its fall;
With rural charms the tranquil mind delight,
And form a picture to th' admiring sight.

"The prettieſt cottage," ſays Miſs Mitford, "on our village green, is the little dwelling of Dame Wilſon. It ſtands in

a corner of the common, where the hedgerows go curving off into a ſort of bay, round a clear bright pond, the earlieſt haunt of the ſwallow. A deep, woody, green lane, ſuch as Hobima or Ruyſdael might have painted—a lane that hints of nightingales—forms one boundary of the garden, and a ſloping meadow the other; while the cottage itſelf, a low, thatched, irregular building, backed by a blooming orchard, and covered with honeyſuckle and jeſſamine, looks like the choſen abode of ſnugneſs and comfort. And ſo it is."

The village of Micklethorpe, pictured by Charles Mackay in one of his best poems, is not leſs pleaſing:—

Embower'd amid the Surrey Hills
The quiet village lay,
Two rows of ancient cottages
Beside the public way,
A modest church, with ivied tower,
And spire with mosses grey.
Beneath the elm's o'er-arching boughs
The little children ran;
The self-same shadows fleck'd the sward
In days of good Queen Anne;
And then, as now, the children sang
Beneath its branches tall—
They grew, they loved, they sinned, they died—
The tree outlived them all.
But still the human flow'rets grew,
And still the children play'd,
And ne'er the tree lack'd youthful feet
To frolic in its shade,
The ploughboy's whistle in the spring,
Or chant of happy maid.

Not leſs welcome will be the lines on the "Lovers' Tree," by Charles Shelton, a poet among a people who ſtill look up to England as the honoured home of their fathers.

By many a hedge-row'd pleasant way,
  By flow'ry meads, and leafy spots,
By woods, by vagrant brooklets, gay
  With lilies and forget-me-nots,
By mills, whose white sails smoothly spin—
  Scenes that might be contentment's realm—
We reach our cheerful village inn;
  But pass we first the village elm.

It stands beside the village green,
  And there has stood three hundred years;
'Mid change of time, and men, and scene,
  Alone, unchanged the look it wears:
Though lightnings thrice have sear'd its head,
  Though storms have scatter'd many a bough,
Its branches ne'er were wider spread,
  Ne'er furnished broader shade than now.

Beneath its shade, when Anne was queen,
  Sad Strephon sigh'd his hopes and fears,
And Damon piped of pastures green
  In coy, consenting Chloe's ears:
For there the lovers ever came,
  In evening's soft obscurity;
And still their tree retains the name
  It took from them—The Lovers' Tree.

MAY DAY.

ONCE in the year at leaſt, the villages of England preſented a ſcene of joyous feſtivities. It was when the first of May uſhered in the vernal Spring, and when the hearty ſummons was heard:—

Come, lasses and lads, take leave of your dads,
And away to the May-pole hie;
For every he, has got him a she,
And the minstrel's standing by.

"The youth of the country" (ſays Stevenſon, the old writer upon Agriculture) "make ready for the morris dance, and the merry milkmaid ſupplies them with ribands her true love had given her. The tall young oak is cut down for a May-pole, and the frolic fry of the town prevent the riſing of the ſun, and, with joy in their faces, and boughs in their hands, they march before it,"

to the village green. It was an incident of this feſtive day, that Lady Craven has preſerved in theſe lines:—

Colin met Sylvia on the green
Once on the charming firſt of May,
And ſhepherds ne'er tell falſe, I ween,
Yet 'twas by chance, the ſhepherds ſay.

Colin he bow'd and bluſh'd, then ſaid,
"Will you, ſweet maid, this firſt of May,
Begin the dance by Colin led,
To make this quite his holiday?"

Sylvia replied, "I ne'er from home
Yet ventured till this firſt of May;
It is not fit for maids to roam,
And make a ſhepherd's holiday."

"It is moſt fit," replied the youth,
"That Sylvia ſhould, this firſt of May,
By me be taught that love and truth
Can make of life a holiday."

At the entertainment given at Elvetham, by the Earl of Hereford, to Queen Elizabeth, in 1591, her Majeſty was awakened in the morning by "three excellent muſitians, who, being diſguiſed in auncient country attire, did greete her with a pleaſant ſong of Corydon and Phillida, made in three partes of purpoſe. The ſong, as well for the worth of the dittie as the aptneſs of the note thereto applied, ſoe pleaſed Her Highneſſe after it had been once ſung, as to commande it again and highly to grace it with her cheerfull acceptaunce and commendation." We are unable to give the "note thereto applied;" but as it was favoured with an *encore* by

one who was a ſkilful muſician, not leſs than an able ſovereign, we may aſſume that it was appropriate, and give only the words which Breton has preſerved:—

In the merrie moneth of Maye,
In a morne by break of daye,
With a troop of damsells playing,
Forth I yode forsooth a Maying

Where anon by a wood side,
Where as May was in his pride,
I espied all alone
Phillida and Corydon.

Much adoe there was, God wot:
He wold love and she wold not;
She sayde never man was trewe;
He sayes none was false to you.

He sayed he had lovde her longe:
She sayes love should have no wronge.
Corydon would kisse her then:
She sayes maids must kisse no men,

Tyll they doe for good and all.
When she made the shepherde call
All the heavens to wytness truthe,
Never lov'd a truer youthe.

Then with many a prettie othe,
Yea and naye, and faithe and trothe;
Such as gentle shepperdes use
When they will not love abuse;

Love that had been long deluded,
Was with kisses swete concluded;
And Phillida with garlands gaye,
Was made the ladye of the Maye.

We find, too, in Herrick's Paſtorals, a very preſſing invitation to the long ſlumbering Corinna, to overcome her evident repugnance to early riſing, and abridge the light labours of the toilette, in order "To do obſervance for a morn of May." Hear the impatient ſwain how he appeals to the lingering maiden:—

Get up, get up, for ſhame, the blooming morne
Upon her wings presents the god unshorne.
See how Aurora throwes her faire
Fresh-quilted colours through the aire;
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herbe and tree.
Each flower has wept, and bowed towards the east,
Above an hour since, yet you not drest,
Nay! not so much as out of bed;
When all the birds have matteyns seyd,
And sung their thankfull hymnes to Heaven, 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation to keep in,
When as a thousand virgins on this day,
Spring sooner than the lark to fetch in May.

Come, my Corinna, come, and comming marke
How each field turns a street, each street a parke,
Made green and dimmed with trees; see how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch; each porch, each doore, ere this
An arke, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorne neatly enterwove,
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields, and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad, and let's obay
The proclamation made for May:
And sin no more as we have done by staying,
But, my Corinna, come, let's goe a Maying.

It was to a ſcene ſuch as Spenſer has thus deſcribed, that the ardent lover invited the fair maiden :—

> Siker this morrow, no longer ago,
> I saw a shole of shepheards outgo,
> With singing and showting and jolly cheere;
> Before them yode a lustie tabrere,
> That to the meynie a hornepipe plaid,
> Whereto they dauncen eche one with his maide.
> To see these folkes make such jovisaunce,
> Made my hart after the pipe to daunce.
> Tho' to the greene-woode they speeden them all,
> To fetchen home May with their musicall:
> And home they bringen, on a royall throne,
> Crown'd as king; and his queen atone
> Was Ladie Flora, on whom did attend
> A faire flocke of faeries, and a fresh bend
> Of lovely nymphs. O, that I were there,
> To helpen the ladies their May-bush to beare.

Even the grave mercers and merchants of London caught ſomething of the hilarity of the villagers, for Stowe ſays :—

"I find alſo that in the month of May, the citizens of London of all eſtates, ſingly in every pariſh, or ſometimes two or three pariſhes joining together, had their ſeveral Mayings and did fetch in May-poles with divers warlike ſhowes, with good archers, morris dancers, and other devices for paſtime, all the day long, and toward the evening they had ſtage plays and bonfires in the ſtreets. Of theſe Mayings, we read in the reign of Henry VI. that the Aldermen and Sheriffs of London being on May-day at the Biſhop of London's wood, in the pariſh of Stebonheath (Stepney), and having there a worſhippful dinner for themſelves and other com-

MAY-DAY GAMES.

moners, Lydgate the poet, that was a monk of Bury, ſent to them by a purſuivant a joyful commendation of that ſeason, containing ſixteen ſtaves of metre royal."

A famous place for erecting the May-pole for the citizens was before the church of St. Andrew, in Leadenhall Street, now called in conſequence St. Andrew Underſhaft. There was alſo a famous May-pole in the Strand, of which it was ſaid:—

> Fairly we marched on, till our approach
> Within the ſpacious passage of the Strand,
> Objected to our ſight a ſummer broach
> Y'cleap'd a May Pole, which in all our land
> No city, town, nor streete can paralell,
> Nor can the lofty spire of Clerkenwell,
> Although we have the advantage of a rock,
> Pearch up more high his turning weather-cock.

This remarkable May-pole was 134 feet in height, and it was erected, as appears from an old tract,* "upon the coſt of the pariſhioners there adjacent, and the gracious conſent of his ſacred Majeſty, with the illuſtrious Prince the Duke of York. This tree was a moſt choice and remarkable piece; 'twas made below Bridge, and brought in two parts up to Scotland Yard, near the King's Palace, and from thence it was conveyed, April 14th (1661), to the Strand to be erected. It was brought with a ſtreamer flouriſhing before it; Drums beating all the way, and other ſortes of muſick; it was ſupposed to be ſo long, that Landſmen could not poſſibly raiſe

* Cities Loyalty Displayed, 4to. (1661).

it; (Prince James, Duke of York, Lord High Admiral of England, commanded twelve ſeamen off a boord to come and officiate the buſineſs, whereupon they came and brought their cables, Pullies, and other tacklings, with ſix great anchors;) after theſe were brought three Crowns, bore by three men bare-headed, and a ſtreamer diſplaying all the way before them; Drums beating, and other muſick playing; numerous multitudes of people thronging the ſtreets with great ſhouts and acclamations all day long. The May-pole then being joyned together, and hoopt about with bands of iron, the crown and cane with the King's Arms richly gilded, was placed on the head of it, a large top like a Balcony was about the middle of it." Then amid ſounds of trumpets and drums, the loud cheerings, and the ſhouts of the people, the May-pole, "far more glorious, bigger, and higher than ever any one that ſtood before it," was raiſed upright, which highly did pleaſe the merrie Monarch, and the illuſtrious Prince, Duke of York; and "little children did much rejoice, and antient people did clap their hands, ſaying, golden days began to appear."

A cruſade againſt May-poles was commenced in the reign of the youthful Edward the Sixth; and the Lords and Commons ſolemnly enacted in 1644, "that all and ſingular May Poles that are or ſhall be erected, ſhall be taken down and removed by the conſtable," under a penalty upon "the ſaid officers, to be fined five ſhillings every week till the ſaid May-pole be taken down." Almoſt the firſt act of the reſtored Charles, was the repeal of theſe edicts. May-poles are no longer an inſtitution of the country, and "Paſquil's

Palinodia" thus mourned the change in the cuſtoms of merrie England :—

Happy the age, and harmlesse were the dayes
(For then true love and amity were found),
When every village did a May Pole raise,
And Whitsun ales and May Games did abound,
And all the lusty yonkers in a rout,
With merry lasses daunced the rod about,
Then Friendship to their banquets bid the guests,
And poore men fared the better for their feasts.

The lords of castles, mannors, townes, and towers,
Rejoiced when they beheld the farmers flourish,
And would come downe unto the summer bowers,
To see the country gallants dance the Morrice.
But since the summer Poles were overthrown,
And all good sports and merriments decayed,
How times and men are changed, so well is knowne,
It were but labour lost if more were said.

SHEPHERDS AND SHEPHERDESSES.

THE charms of rural and paſtoral life have in almoſt every age been ſung by poets; ſcenes of Arcadian innocence and ſimplicity have been preſented by painters in ſunny pictures, and with the moſt pleaſing colours; and eſſayiſts and noveliſts have drawn abundant materials from paſtoral life and occupations. The works of old Spenſer abound with the loves and woes of gentle ſhepherds; and Milton, turning his gaze awhile from a "Paradiſe Loſt," and the glittering thrones of the Cherubim, found there was yet an elyſium on earth; and exclaimed in the gladſome ſtrains of "L'Allegro,"—

> Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
> As the landscape round it measures,
> Russet lawns, and fallows gray
> Where the nibbling flocks do stray.

It was ſuch a ſcene, perhaps, as that, which Sir Philip Sidney had already deſcribed in his "Arcadia:"—

"There were hills which garniſhed their proud heights with ſtately trees; humble valleys whoſe baſe eſtate ſeemed comforted with the refreſhing of ſilver rivers; meadows enamelled with all ſorts of eye-pleaſing flowers; thickets which, being lined with moſt pleaſant ſhade, were witneſſed ſo, by the cheerful diſpoſition of many well-tuned birds; each paſture ſtored with ſheep feeding with ſober ſecurity, while the pretty lambs, with bleating oratory, craved the dam's comfort; here a ſhepherd's boy piping as though he ſhould never be old, there a young ſhepherdeſs knitting, and withal ſinging, and it ſeemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-muſic."

Pope, too, has told of the happy ſecurity of paſtoral life, in the couplet,—

> Piping on their reeds the shepherds go,
> Nor fear an ambush, nor suspect a foe.

The elegant Wotton appreciated in his day theſe rural charms, and thus tuned his muſic to their praiſe:—

> Mistaken mortals! did you know
> Where joy, heart's-ease, and comforts grow,
> You'd scorn proud towers,
> And seek them in these bowers;
> Where winds sometimes our woods perhaps may shake,
> But blustering care could never tempest make,
> Nor murmurs e'er come nigh us,
> Save of fountains that glide by us.

Here's no fantastic masque or dance,
But of our kids that frisk and prance;
Nor wars are seen,
Unless upon the green
Two harmless lambs are butting one another—
Which done, doth bleating run each to his mother;
And wounds are never found,
Save what the ploughshare gives the ground.

England's greateſt dramatiſt makes the unfortunate Henry thus ſigh, on the hard-fought field of Towton, for the happineſs of a ſhepherd's life:—

——Methinks it were a happy life,
To be no better than a homely swain;
To sit upon a hill as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run:
How many make the hour full complete,
How many hours bring about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live.
* * * * * *
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece:
So minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years,
Pass'd over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.
Ah! what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!
Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds, looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy
To kings, that fear their subjects' treachery?
Oh yes it doth; a thousand fold it doth.
And to conclude,—the shepherd's homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,

All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
His body couched on a curious bed,
When care, mistrust, and treason wait on him.

Liſten to Phineas Fletcher, another poet of the golden age; how freſh and invigorating is the ſcene which he preſents to our view! and how ſimple and healthy are the occupations of the folding and unfolding of the flock, which form the ſole charge and only care of the gentle and happy ſhepherds!

Thrice, oh thrice happy, shepherd's life and state!
When courts are happiness' unhappy pawns!
His cottage low and safely humble gate
Shuts out proud Fortune with her scorns and fawns:
No feared treason breaks his quiet sleep;
Singing all day, his flock he learns to keep,
Himself as innocent as are his simple sheep.

Instead of music and base flattering tongues,
Which wait to first salute my lord's uprise,
The cheerful lark wakes him with early songs,
And birds' sweet whistling notes unlock his eyes:
In country plays is all the strife he uses;
Or sing, or dance unto the rural muses;
And but in music's sports all difference refuses.

His certain life, that never can deceive him,
Is full of thousand sweets and rich content:
The smooth leaved beeches in the field receive him
With coolest shades, till noon-tide rage is spent;
His life is neither toss'd in boist'rous seas
Of troublous world, nor lost in slothful ease;
Pleased and full blest he lives, when he his God can please.

His bed of wool yields safe and quiet sleeps,
While by his side his faithful spouse hath place;
His little son into his bosom creeps,
The lively picture of his father's face:
Never his humble house nor state torment him:
Less he could like, if less his God had sent him;
And when he dies, green turfs with grassy tomb content him.

With the dawn of day the ſhepherds awaken to the pleaſant call of John Fletcher, the companion of Beaumont,—

Shepherds, rise and shake off sleep—
See the blushing morn doth peep
Through your windows, while the sun
To the mountain-tops has run,
Gilding all the vales below
With his rising flames, which grow
Brighter with his climbing still—
Up! ye lazy swains! and fill
Bag and bottle for the field!
Clasp your cloaks fast, lest they yield
To the bitter north-east wind;
Call the maidens up, and find
Who lies longest, that she may
Be chidden for untimed delay.
Feed your faithful dogs, and pray
Heaven to keep you from decay;
So unfold, and then—away.

At cloſe of day, the flocks are to be folded, ſo—

Shepherds all, and maidens fair,
Fold your flocks up, for the air
'Gins to thicken, and the sun
Already his great course has run.

See the dew-drops, how they kiss
Every little flower that is
Hanging on their velvet heads,
Like a rope of crystal beads ;
See the heavy clouds low falling,
And bright Hesperus down calling
The dead night from underground ;
At whose rising, mists unsound,
Damps and vapours fly apace,
Hovering o'er the wanton face
Of those pastures where they come,
Striking dead both bud and bloom.
Therefore, from such danger lock
Every one his lovèd flock ;
And let your dogs lie loose without,
Lest the wolf come as a scout
From the mountain, and, ere day,
Bear a lamb or kid away ;
Or the crafty thievish foe
Break upon your simple flocks.
To secure yourself from these
Be not too secure in ease ;
So shall you good shepherds prove,
And deserve your master's love.
Now, good night ! may sweetest slumbers
And soft silence fall in numbers
On your eyelids ! so farewell !
Thus I end my evening knell !

There are few portraits drawn with greater care, or finiſh, than that one by the hands of Sir Thomas Overbury, of "A Fayre and happy milk-maid."

"The golden eares of corne fall and kiſſe her feet when ſhe reapes them as if they wiſht to be bound and led priſoners by the

ſame hand that fell'd them. Her breath is her own, which ſcents all the yeare long of *June*, like a new made hay cocke. She makes her hand hard with labour, and her heart ſoft with pity; and when winter evenings fall early (ſitting at her merrie wheele), ſhe ſings a defiance to the giddy wheele of fortune. She doth all things with ſo ſweet a grace, it ſeems ignorance will not ſuffer her to do ill, ſeeing her mind is to doe well. The *garden* and bee-hive are all her phyſick and chyrurgerye, and ſhe lives the longer for't. She dares goe alone, and unfold ſheepe i' the night, and feares no manner of ill becauſe ſhe means none; yet, to ſay truth, ſhe is never alone, for ſhe is ſtill accompanied with *old ſongs*, *honeſt thoughts*, and *prayers*, but ſhort ones, yet they have their efficacy in that they are not pauled with enſuing idle cogitations. Thus lives ſhe, and all her care is that ſhe may die in the *ſpring-time*, to have ſtore of flowers ſtucke upon her winding ſheete."

England has ſhepherds now, and her hills and dales afford paſture for countleſs flocks; but it is not "*merrie England*," as in the days of yore: it is a land of exports and imports, a huge trading nation, the battle-ground of competition; the arena of peaceful—or, as it is the faſhion to term it, "induſtrial ſtrife." Dyer's prophecy, in his poem of "The Fleece," now a century old, is rapidly being fulfilled.

> Shall we burst ſtrong Darien's chain,
> Steer our bold fleets between the cloven rocks,
> And through the great Pacific every joy
> Of civil life diffuse? Are not her isles
> Numerous and large? Have they not harbours calm,

A FAIRE AND HAPPY MILK-MAYD.

Inhabitants and manners? Haply, too,
Peculiar sciences and other forms
Of trade, and useful products to exchange
For woolly vestures? * * *
A day will come, if not too deep we drink
The cup which luxury on careless wealth,
Pernicious gift, bestows: a day will come
When through new channels sailing, we shall clothe
The Californian coast, and all the realms
That stretch from Anian's Straits to proud Japan.

HARVEST HOME.

BUT there was joy in the village homes of England, not alone at the dawn of Spring, and the advent of

> The flow'ry May, who from her green lap throws,
> The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose;

but when Autumn had dyed the foliage of the foreſt trees with its many hues, and tinged the fields of waving grain with a golden tint; when "the appointed weeks of harveſt" arrived, and the huſbandman reaped where he had ſown, then there went up again the merrie ſhouts from the broad lands of Old England. Aye! when reaping-machines were unknown; when ſteam-ploughs had not even been the ſubject of dreams; when tall factory-like chimneys were not ſeen rearing their graceleſs

forms above the homeſtead, in bold rivalry with the modeſt village ſpire; when the peaſant's flail had no tireleſs competitor in the iron threſhing-machine,—they who reaped, and ploughed, and ſowed, and mowed, were far merrier than in theſe days of model cottages, prize ploughmen, agricultural labourers, and aged paupers. "The harveſt home" formed one of thoſe occaſions of rural feſtivity of which Clare, the farm-labourer's ſon, ſaid:—

> O Rural Life! what charms thy meanness hide;
> What sweet descriptions bards disdain to sing;
> What loves, what graces on thy plains abide:
> Oh, could I soar me on the Muse's wing,
> What rifled charms should my researches bring!
> Pleased would I wander where those charms reside;
> Of rural sports and beauties would I sing;
> Those beauties, Wealth, which you in vain deride,
> Beauties of richest bloom, superior to your pride.

Stevenſon, the famous writer on Engliſh Agriculture, tells how, in the good old times, the harveſt was wont to be celebrated:—

"The furmenty pot welcomes home the harveſt cart, and the garland of flowers crowns the captaine of the reapers. The pipe and the tabor are now ſet buſily a-work, and the lad and the laſs will have no lead on their heels. O! 'tis the merrie time wherein honeſt neighbours make good cheer; and God is glorified in his bleſſings on the earth."

Herrick gives us a lively ſcene of Harveſt Home:—

Come, ſons of ſummer, by whoſe toile
We are the lords of wine and oile;
By whoſe tough labour and rough hands,
We rip up firſt, then reap our lands;
Crown'd with the eares of corn, now come,
And to the pipe ſing harveſt home.
Come forth, my Lord, and ſee the cart
Dreſt up with all the country art.
See here a mankin, there a ſheet,
As ſpotleſs pure as it is ſweet;
The horſes, mares, and friſking fillies,
Clad all in linen, white as lilies;
The harveſt ſwains and wenches bound
For joy to ſee the hock-cart crown'd.

When Tuſſer wrote his "Five Hundred Points of Huſbandry," he evidently conſidered a good feaſt and merrie making at harveſt homes as one moſt eſſential of his "points," for he tells us:—

In harveſt time, harveſt folke,
servants and all,
Should make altogether,
good cheere in the hall:
And fill out the black bole,
of bleith to their ſong,
And let them be merry
all harveſt time long.
Once ended thy harveſt,
let none be beguilde,
Please ſuch as did please thee,
man, woman, and child.
Thus doing, with alway
ſuch help as they can,
Thou winneſt the praiſe
of the labouring man.

THE HOCK-CART.

"Tuſſer Redivivus" adds:—"This, the poor labourer thinks, crowns all; a good ſupper muſt be provided, and every one that did anything toward the Inning, muſt now have ſome reward, as ribbons, laces, rows of pins to boys and girls, if never ſo ſmall, for their encouragement, and to be ſure plumb-pudding. The men muſt now have ſome better than beſt drink, which with a little tobacco, and their ſcreaming for their largeſſes, their buſineſs will ſoon be done."

Some quaint people who love the "good old times," even now rejoice to hear the jovial ſong of the harveſt men:—

> We have ploughed, we have sowed,
> We have reaped, we have mowed,
> We have brought home every load,
> Hip, hip, hip, *Harvest Home!*

But there are "potent, grave, and reverend ſignors" now-a-days who ſeek to celebrate the harveſt home by intereſting lectures on "Common Things," and ſage advice to

> A merry and an artless throng, whose souls
> Beam through untutored glances—

to patronize Savings' Banks, and ſubſcribe to Burial Societies. Such lines as thoſe of Tennyſon, brother of the Poet Laureate, are more ſuited to the merrie days of England, than to the preſent grim and iron age of Political Economy:—

> Come, let us mount the breezy down,
> And hearken to the tumult blown
> Up from the campaign and the town.

The harvest days are come again;
The vales are surging with the grain;
The merry work goes on amain;

Pale streaks of cloud scarce veil the blue,
Against the golden harvest hue
The Autumn trees look fresh and new;

Wrinkled brows relax with glee,
And aged life they laugh to see
The sickness follow o'er the lea;

I see the little kerchief'd maid,
With dimpling cheek and bodice staid,
Mid the stout striplings half afraid;

Her red lip and her soft blue eye
Mate the poppy's crimson dye
And the cornflowers waving by;

I see the sire with bronzed chest;
Mad babes amid the blithe unrest
Seem leaping from the mother's breast;

The mighty youth and supple child
Go forth, the yellow sheaves are piled,
The toil is mirth, the mirth is wild!

Old head and sunny forehead peers
O'er the warm sea, or disappears,
Drown'd amid the waving ears;

Barefoot urchins run, and hide
In hollows, 'twixt the corn, or glide
Towards the tall sheaf's sunny side;

Lusty pleasures, hob-nail'd fun,
Throng into the noonday sun,
And mid the merry reapers run.

Draw the clear October out;
Another and another bout,
Then back to labour with a shout!

The banded sheaves stand orderly
Against the purple Autumn sky,
Like armies of Prosperity.

Yet when the shadows eastwards seen
O'er the smooth shorn fallows lean,
And silence sits where they have been,

Amid the gleaners I will stay,
While the shout and roundelay
Faint off, and daylight dies away.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

IF we would learn how merry were our anceſtors, how thoroughly they gave themſelves up to the enjoyment of their ſports and paſtimes, we could not have ſtronger proof than is afforded in the ſermon of Biſhop Latimer, preached before King Edward the Sixth. The good Biſhop there laments that the attractions of Robin Hood's day were greater than the charms of his eloquence.

"I came once myſelf," ſays he, "to a place riding a journey homeward from London, and ſent word overnight into the town that I would preach there in the morning becauſe it was a holy day, and I took my horſe and my company and went thither. (I thought I ſhould have found a great company in the church.) When I came there, the church door was faſt locked. I tarried there half-an-hour and more; at laſt the key was found, and one of the pariſh comes to me and ſays: 'This is a buſy day with us, we cannot heare you; this is Robin Hoodes daye; the pariſh is gone abroad to gather for

Robin Hoode.' I thought my rochet would have been regarded, though I were not: but it would not ſerve, but was fayne to give place to Robin Hoode's men."

This ardent love of merriment extended upwards from the people; and if Latimer had to complain of the villagers' preference for Robin Hood, the venerable Thomas Cartwright certainly found the merry humour even of his clergy ſomewhat in exceſs, for we find him ſaying, in his "Admonition to Parliament againſt the uſe of the Common Prayer,"—

"If there be a bear or a bull to be baited in the afternoon, or a jackanapes to ride on horſeback, the miniſter hurries the ſervice over in a ſhameful manner in order to be preſent at the ſhow."

Among the numerous ſports and paſtimes of the "merrie days of England," thoſe which were connected with the uſe of the bow, were long held in the higheſt eſteem. From France our fathers imported the game of ſhooting at the Popin-jay, thus referred to by an old writer—

> The wooden bird on horseback showing,
> By beat of drum with pipers blowing,
> They troop along huzzaing, tooting,
> To hold their annual game of shooting.

The game as firſt inſtituted in France conſiſted of cruelly tethering a large bird in a field ſo that it could fly only to a certain height, and the youth of the ſecond order of nobles aſſembled and took aim at him with their bows and arrows, in preſence of the nobility, gentry, and magiſtracy. He who killed the bird was named "king of the archers" for the year, and the next two beſt

markſmen were named to the office of the king's lieutenant, and ſtandard-bearer. When the ſport was introduced into England, a wooden bird was ſubſtituted for the live one, and the prize of victory was awarded to the archer who could knock the "Papeguay" off the pole. Stow tells of a large Cloſe called the "Tazell," which in his day was let to the croſs-bow markers, where the citizens uſed to ſhoot for prizes at the wooden bird. Henry the Eighth founded a perpetual corporation, called "the Order of St. George," the members of which were permitted for paſtime-ſake to practiſe ſhooting at all ſorts of marks and butts, and at "the game of the Popinjay." The ſkill of the Engliſh bowmen was teſted on many a battle-field, and the feats of William Cloudeſlie, Adam Bell, and Clym of the Clough, not leſs than thoſe of Robin Hood, have been cheriſhed in the ballads and traditions of our country. We have, however, only to treat of archery as one of the ſports and paſtimes of merry England. Bulwer has given a vivid deſcription, in the "Laſt of the Barons," of one of the gatherings of the people at theſe trials of ſkill:—

"Open ſpaces for the popular games and diverſion were then numerous in the ſuburbs of the metropolis. Grateful to ſome the freſh pool of Iſlington; to others, the graſs-bare fields of Finſbury; to all, the hedgeleſs plains of vaſt Mile-end. But the ſite to which we are now ſummoned was a new and maiden holiday-ground, lately beſtowed upon the towns-folk of Weſtminſter, by the powerful Earl of Warwick. The ground was well ſuited to the purpoſe to which it was devoted. But what particularly now demands our attention was a broad plot in the ground, dedicated to the noble

SHOOTING THE POPINJAY.

diverſion of archery. The reigning houſe of York owed much of its military ſucceſs to the ſuperiority of the bowmen under its banners, and the Londoners themſelves were jealous of their reputation in this martial accompliſhment. For the laſt fifty years, notwithſtanding the warlike nature of the times, the practice of the bow, in the intervals of peace, had been more neglected than ſeemed wiſe to the rulers. Both the king and his loyal city had of late taken much pains to enforce the due exerciſe of 'Goddes inſtrumente,' upon which an edict had declared that 'the liberties and honour of England principally reſted!' * * * The butts, formed of turf, with a ſmall white mark faſtened by a very minute peg, were placed apart, one at each end, at the diſtance of eleven ſcore yards. At the extremity, where the ſhooting commenced, the crowd aſſembled, taking care to keep clear from the oppoſite butt, as the warning word of 'Faſt' was thundered forth; but eager was the general murmur, and many were the wagers given and accepted, as ſome well-known archer tried his chance. Near the butt that now formed the target, ſtood the marker with his white wand; and the rapidity with which archer after archer diſcharged his ſhaft, and then, if it miſſed, hurried acroſs the ground to pick it up (for arrows were dear enough not to be lightly loſt), amidſt the jeers and laughter of the byſtanders, was highly animated and diverting. As yet, however, no markſman had hit the white, though many had gone cloſe to it, when Nicholas Alwyn ſtepped forward; and there was ſomething ſo unwarlike in his whole air, ſo prim in his gait, ſo careful in his deliberate ſurvey of the ſhaft, and his preciſe adjuſtment of the leathern gauntlet that protected the arm from

the painful twang of the ſtring, that a general burſt of laughter from the byſtanders atteſted their anticipation of a ſignal failure.

"'Fore heaven!' said Montagu, 'he handles his bow an' it were a yard meaſure. One would think he were about to bargain for the bow-ſtring, he eyes it ſo cloſely.'

"'And now,' ſaid Nicholas, ſlowly adjuſting the arrow, 'a ſhot for the honour of old Weſtmoreland!' And as he ſpoke, the arrow ſprang gallantly forth, and quivered in the very heart of the white. There was a general movement of ſurpriſe among the ſpectators, as the marker thrice ſhook his wand over his head. But Alwyn, as indifferent to their reſpect as he had been to their ridicule, turned and ſaid, with a ſignificant glance at the ſilent nobles, 'We ſpringals of London can take care of our own, if need be.'"

The great feat of Cloudeſlie, the William Tell of England, was to ſhoot the apple from the head of his child in the preſence of the king. The ſkilful archer bound his ſon of ſeven years old to a tree, placed an apple on the child's head, meaſured one hundred and twenty yards from the ſtake, entreated the ſpectators to be ſilent,

> And then drew out a fayre brode arrowe;
> Hys bowe was great and longe,
> He set that arrowe in his bowe
> That was both styffe and stronge.
>
> Then Cloudeslie cleft the apple in two,
> As many a man myght see.
> "Over God forbode," sayde the kynge,
> "That thou sholde shote at me."

ROBIN HOOD.

IT was natural that in the midſt of all the "merrie-makynge" and the harveſt feaſts of olden times, our anceſtors ſhould have loved the memory of the good and bold "Robyn Hode,"—as well as of that trio of liberty-loving Saxons, who years before had reſiſted and defied, in the faſtneſſes of their foreſt-homes, the encroachments of Norman conquerors. William and his ſucceſſors would have made of the broad lands of England only one vaſt hunting field, and would have governed the vanquiſhed people by the curfew-bell and a game law. But Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudeſlie, —all honour to their memories!—laughed at the King's laws, and ſlew and ate the Plantagenets' veniſon deſpite his cruel

edicts. Later, when England's liberties appeared to have fallen for ever on the fatal field of Evesham, and "freedom shrieked" when the brave Simon de Montfort was slain in bloody fight, the old Abbot of St. Colomb said that "Robert Hood lived an outlawe among the woodland copses and thickets," cherishing there that love of liberty which has since made England "great, glorious, and free." What would we not now give to see Little John and Friar Tuck, in their forest haunts,—this band of outlaws, clad in their Lincoln green, their bows slung over their shoulders, and Robin tenderly leading his beloved Maid Marian through the forest of Sherwood? It must have been a life of joyous excitement, and we might imagine that Shakespeare had put into the mouth of Amiens, when in the sunny glades of Arden, some song of the outlaws which tradition had preserved to his time :—

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall we see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

The banished Duke, represented in the wondrous drama of "As you Like It," living in his sylvan retirement, is but a picture of the brave Earl of Huntingdon,—our own Robin Hood of Sherwood forest. "Where will the old Duke live?" asks Oliver. "They say he is already in the forest of Arden, and

a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England, and fleet the time careleſſly as they did in the golden world." Let the elegant ſketch of Drayton tell of Robin Hood, that,—

In this our spacious isle, I think there is not one,
But he hath heard some talk of him and Little John;
And to the end of time, the tales shall ne'er be done
Of Sherlock, George-a-green, and Much the miller's son;
Of Tuck, the merry friar, which many a sermon made
In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws and their trade.
An hundred valiant men had this brave Robin Hood
Still ready at his call, that bowmen were right good;
All clad in Lincoln green, with caps of red and blue,
His fellow's winded horn not one of them but knew,
When setting to their lips their little bugles shrill
The warbling echoes waked from every dale and hill.
Their bauldricks set with studs, almost their shoulders cast,
To which under their arms their shafts were buckled fast;
A short sword at their belt, a buckler scarce a span,
Who struck below the knee, not counted there a man:
All made of Spanish yew, their bows were wondrous strong:
They not an arrow drew, but was a cloth-yard long.

* * * * * * *

And of these archers brave, there was not any one,
But he could kill a deer his swiftest speed upon,
Which they did boil and roast, in many a mighty wood,
Sharp hunger the fine sauce to their more kingly food.
Then taking them to rest, his merry men and he
Slept many a summer's night under the greenwood tree.
From wealthy abbots' chests, and churls' abundant store,
What oftentimes he took he shared amongst the poor:
No lordly bishop came in lusty Robin's way,
To him before he went, but for his pass must pay.
The widow in distress he graciously relieved,

> And remedied the wrongs of many a virgin grieved:
> He from the husband's bed no married woman wan,
> But to his mistress dear, his loved Marian,
> Was ever constant known, which wheresoe'er she came,
> Was sovereign of the woods; chief lady of the game:
> Her clothes tucked to her knee, and dainty braided hair,
> With bow and quiver armed, she wander'd here and there,
> Amongst the forests wild; Diana never knew
> Such pleasures, nor such harts as Marian slew.

The articles of that war which Robin and his men waged againſt the portion of ſociety which ſought to oppreſs them, are duly ſet forth in a very famous "playe of Robyn Hode, very proper to be played in Maye Games." In one of theſe ſcenes Robyn commands all his yeomen to be cheerful, while Little John reads the "articles,"—and theſe ordain that no man preſume to call our maſter by name of earle, lorde, baron, knight, or ſquire, but ſimply by the name of Robin Hood; that faire Matilda be only known hereafter as "Maid Marian;" that no paſſenger ſhould be permitted to paſs "till he with Robin feaſte;" that they ſhould never "the poore man wrong, nor ſpare a prieſt, a uſurer or clarke;" and laſtly—

> You shall defend with all your power,
> Maids, widows, orphants, and distressed men.

A refreſhing picture of this foreſt life is to be found in "Knight's Old England:"—

"What a world of ſunſhine and green leaves, and flickering lights and ſhadows, breaks in upon us,—excitement in the chace,

whether they followed the deer, or were themſelves followed by the ſheriff through buſh and brake, over bog and quagmire,—of enjoyment in their ſhooting and wreſtling matches, in their ſword fights and ſword dances, in their viſits to all the ruſtic wakes and feaſts of the neighbourhood, where they would be received as the moſt welcome of gueſts! Now the outlaws would be viſited by the wandering minſtrels, coming thither to amuſe them with old ballads, and to gather a rich harveſt of materials for new ones, that ſhould be liſtened to with the deepeſt intereſt and delight all England through; not only while the authors recited them, but for centuries after the very names of ſuch authors were forgotten. The legitimate poet minſtrel would be followed by the humbler gleeman, forming one of a band of revellers, in which would be compriſed a taborer, a bag-piper, and dancers or tumblers, and who, tempted by the well-known liberality of the foreſters, would penetrate the thick wood to find them. And great would be the applauſe at the humorous dances and accompanying ſongs, at their balancings and tumblings,—wonderful, almoſt too wonderful, to be produced without the aid of evil ſpirits, would ſeem their ſleight-of-hand tricks. At another time there would ſuddenly be heard echoing through the foreſt glades the ſounds of ſtrange buglers from ſtrange hunters. Their rich apparel ſhows them to be of no ordinary rank. How dare they, then, intrude upon the foreſt king? Nay, there is not any danger. Are there not lady hunters among the company? and what ſays the ballad, the truth of which every one atteſts?—

Robyn loved one dere ladye,
For doute of dedely synne
Wolde he never do company harme,
That any woman was ynne.

So their huſbands, brothers, ſons, and fathers, hunt freely through Sherwood in their company, ſafe from the ſudden arrow, aye, though even the hated ſheriff himſelf be among them."

We cannot tell, within our narrow limits, what fun and frolic, what merry humours, or what hair-breadth eſcapes, Robin Hood enjoyed, nor tell of his adventures with the potter, the beggar, the tanner, and the tinker, or how he fought with the gallant Pinder of Wakefield, when

He leaned his back fast unto a thorn,
And his foot against a stone;
And there he fought a long summer's day,
A summer's day so long,
Till that their swords on their broad bucklers,
Were broke fast into their hands.

Nor can we narrate all his facetious frolics with the old Biſhop of Hereford:—

When Robin Hood took the bishop by the hand,
And bound him fast to a tree;
And made him sing a mass, God wot,
To him and his yeomandree.

And then they brought him through the wood,
And set him on his dapple gray;
And gave him the tail within his hand,
And bad him for Robin Hood pray.

And how, finally,

> Robin Hood took the bishop by the hand,
> And he caused the music to play ;
> And he made the old bishop to dance in his boots,
> And glad he could so get away.

The bold foreſter's horn is ſilenced, but the laſt ſcene which ended the ſtrange eventful hiſtory, was calm as ſummer ſunſet.

> The night dews fall not gentler to the ground,
> Nor weary worn-out winds expire so soft,

as did bold Robin paſs away. A rare old ballad, called, "His Laſt Farewell," preſents a ſcene of reſigned compoſure which is highly characteriſtic :—

> When Robin Hood and Little John,
> *Down a down, a down, a down,*
> Went o'er that bank of broom,
> Said Robin Hood to Little John,
> We have shot for many a poind.
> *Hey down, a down, a down.*
>
> But I am not able to shoot more,
> My arrows will not flee ;
> I never hurt woman in all my life,
> Nor man in woman's company.
>
> I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
> Nor at my death shall it be ;
> But give me my bent bow in my hand,
> And a broad arrow I'll let flee,
> And where this arrow is taken up,
> There shall my grave digged be.

Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet;
And lay my bent bow at my side,
Which was my music sweet.
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.

Let me have length and breadth enough,
With a green sod under my feet;
That they may say when I am dead,
Here lies bold Robin Hood.

These words they readily promised him,
Which did bold Robin please;
And there they buried Robin Hood,
Near to the fair Kirkleys.

Robin Hood was regarded by the common people as the repreſentative and the hero of a cauſe far older and deeper even than that in which De Montfort had ſo nobly fallen; we mean, the permanent proteſt of the induſtrious claſſes againſt the galling injuſtice and inſulting immorality of that framework of Engliſh ſociety, and that fabric of eccleſiaſtical as well as civil authority, which the iron arm of the Conqueſt had eſtabliſhed. Under a ſyſtem of general oppreſſion,—baſed avowedly on the right of conqueſt,—the ſuffering claſſes beheld in a perſonage like Robert Hood a ſort of particular Providence, which ſcattered a few grains of equity amid that monſtrous maſs of wrong. And when in his defenſive conflicts the well-aimed miſſile entered the breaſt of ſome one of their petty tyrants, though regarded by the ruling powers as an arrow of malignant fate, it was hailed by the wrung

ROBIN HOOD IN FINSBURY FIELD

and goaded people as a ſhaft of protecting or avenging Heaven. The ſervices of ſuch a chieftain, too, afforded a ſure and tempting refuge for every Anglo-Saxon who, ſtrong in heart and in muſcle, and ſtung by intolerable inſult, had flown in the face of the Norman owner, or his owner's bailiff,—for every *villein* who, in defending the decencies of his hearth, might have brained ſome brutal collector of the poll-tax,—for every ruſtic ſportſman who had incurred death or mutilation, the ferocious penalty of the Anglo-Norman foreſt laws, for "taking, killing, and eating deer." What wonder, then, that in the merrie days of England, men of all conditions,—the peaſant in his cottage home,—the ſober citizen in the buſy "chepe" of London,—the nobles, and even the monarch on his throne, ſhould ſtill preſerve the memory of the good chivalrous bowman? Thus it was, as Stowe tells us, that "In the month of May, namely on May-day in the morning, every man, without impediment, would walk into the ſweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their ſpirits with the beauty and ſavour of ſweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds, praiſing God in their kind; and for example hereof, Edward Hall hath noted, that King Henry VIII., as in the 3rd of his reign, and divers other years, ſo namely in the 7th of his reign, on May-day in the morning, with Queen Katherine his wife, accompanied with many lords and ladies, rode a-Maying, from Greenwitch to the high ground of Shooter's Hill, where as they paſſed by the way they eſpied a company of tall yeomen, clothed all in green, with green hoods, and bows and arrows, to the

number of two hundred; one, being their chieftain, was called Robin Hoode, who required the king and his company to ſtay and ſee his men ſhoot; whereunto the king granting, Robin Hoode whiſtled, and all the two hundred archers ſhot off, looſing all at once; and when he whiſtled again they likewiſe ſhot again; their arrows whiſtled by craft of the head ſo that the noiſe was ſtrange and loud, which greatly delighted the king, queen, and their company. Moreover this Robin Hoode deſired the king, and queen, with their retinue, to enter the green wood, where, in arbours made of boughs, and decked with flowers, they were ſet and ſerved plentifully with veniſon and wine by Robin Hoode and his men, to their great contentment, and had other pageants and paſtimes."

PLAYS AND MYSTERIES.

MANY and various were the amuſements of our forefathers. Evidence of the abundance of national ſports and paſtime are to be met with in almoſt all old Engliſh writers; and in a work of ſo unpromiſing a title as the "Anatomy of Melancholy," by Burton, in the ſeventeenth century, we are told that "ringing, bowling, ſhooting, playing with keel-pins, coits, pitching of bars, hurling, wreſtling, leaping, running, fencing, muſtering, ſwimming, playing with waſters, foils, foot-balls, balowns, running at the quintain, and the like, are common recreations of country folks." To this long liſt he adds, "Dancing, ſinging, maſking, mumming, and ſtage plays, are reaſonable recreations if in ſeaſon; as are May-games, wakes, and Whitſun Ales, if not at unſeaſonable hours;"

and the good-hearted Burton ſays, "Let them," that is, the common people, "freely feaſt, ſing, dance, have puppet-plays, hobby-horſes, tabers; crowds (fiddles), and bagpipes, and play at ball and barley brake. Plays, maſks, jeſters, gladiators, tumblers, and jugglers, are to be winked at, leſt the people ſhould do worſe than attend them." The love of pageants, ſhows, theatrical performances and interludes, was very general among the people. To ſuch an extent was it carried, that it was found materially to interfere with the devotions of the Sabbath. The miniſters of the Church, according to Stephen Goſſon, were wont to "poſt over the ſervice as faſt as they can galloppe," for there were ſome games "or interlude to be plaide, and if no place elſe can be gotten, this interlude muſt be playde in the church." In order to regulate to ſome extent this inclination to be merry, the magiſtrates of London obtained an edict from Queen Elizabeth, to the effect "that all heatheniſh playes and interludes ſhould be baniſhed upon Sabbath dayes." The legiſlature of thoſe days believed that there was wiſdom in laughter; they ſought only to apply to it the rule of the wiſeſt of men, that there was a fitting time for all things, and theſe times, they thought, were not altogether excluſive of Sundays, for we find in 1618 James publiſhing the remarkable Declaration—

"Whereas we did juſtly in our progreſſe through Lancaſhire rebuke ſome puritannes and preciſe people, in prohibiting and unlawfully puniſhing of our good people for uſing their lawfull recreations and honeſt exerciſes on Sundayes and other holy dayes after the afternoon ſermon or ſervice; It is our will that after the end of

Divine ſervice, our good people be not diſturbed, letted, or diſcouraged from any lawfull recreation, ſuch as dancing either for men or women, archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other ſuch harmleſs recreation; nor for having of May games, Whitſun Ales, and morris daunces, and the ſetting up of May Poles, and other ſports therewith uſed, ſo as the ſame be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of Divine ſervice. But withall we doe here account ſtill as prohibited all unlawfull games to be uſed upon Sunday onely as beare and bull baiting, and interludes."

Miracle-plays, dramas from Scripture, myſteries, ſecular plays and interludes, were the germs from which the Britiſh drama has ariſen. In early times theſe plays were performed during the ſeaſon of Lent. The pariſh clerks of London were the chief performers in a play at Skinner's Well, near Smithfield, which we are told laſted three days, the performance being honoured by the preſence of the unhappy Richard II. and his queen, Iſabella of France. In 1490 the clerks alſo played for eight days, the ſubject being "the Creation of the World." The ſcholars of St. Paul alſo formed a very celebrated company of miracle-players; they appear to have been deſirous of retaining a monopoly in this reſpect, and were no doubt, like members of the profeſſion of the preſent day, ſomewhat influenced by feelings of jealouſy at the ſucceſs of rivals. No doubt the pariſh clerks were conſidered as trenching ſomewhat on their profeſſion, for in 1378 they preſented a petition to Richard II. praying him "to prohibit ſome unexpert people from preſenting the hiſtory of the Old and New Teſtament, to the great prejudice

of the ſaid clergy, who have been at great expenſe in order to repreſent it publickly at Chriſtmas." The pariſh clerks perſevered, and Royal Richard, the people's king, honoured their performance near the ſpot where, a ſhort time before, he had met his unruly ſubjects headed by Wat Tyler, and promiſed that he would be their leader. There was too a famous Coventry play, of which Dugdale ſays,—

" Before the ſuppreſſion of the monaſteries, this city (Coventry) was very famous for the pageants that were played therein upon Corpus Chriſti day, which occaſioning very great confluence of people thither from far and near, was of no ſmall benefit thereto: which pageants being acted with mighty ſtate and reverence by the Grey Friars, had theatres for the ſeveral ſcenes, very large and high, placed upon wheels, and drawn to all the eminent parts of the city for the better advantage of ſpectators, and contained the ſtory of the Old and New Teſtament, compoſed in the old Engliſh rithme."

This play conſiſted of forty acts, each of which formed a detached ſubject from the Scripture, beginning with the Creation, and ending with the Laſt Judgment. We will not pretend to give an analyſis of this very comprehenſive drama. The deſcription of the firſt Act, taken from Strutt's " Sports and Paſtimes," will ſuffice to convey a notion of the work.

" In the firſt pageant or act, the Deity is repreſented ſeated on his throne by himſelf, delivering a ſpeech of forty lines, beginning thus:—

'Ego sum Alpha et Omega, principium et finis.'

The angels then enter, ſinging from the Church Service, 'To Thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein. To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hoſts.' Lucifer next makes his appearance, and deſires to know if the hymn they ſang was in honour of God, or in honour of him? The good angels readily reply, 'In honour of God;' the evil angels incline to worſhip Lucifer, and he preſumes to ſeat himſelf on the throne of the Deity, who commands him to depart from heaven to hell, which dreadful ſentence he is compelled to obey, and with his wicked aſſociates deſcends to the Lower Regions."

Deſpite the ſerious and ſacred character of the dramas, ſomething of the comic element was generally introduced, to ſatisfy the deſire to be merry among the ſpectators. Upon Beelzebub generally devolved the taſk of raiſing the pleaſant laugh, and this, too, notwithſtanding the ſevere puniſhment to which he was the victim. He was aſſiſted by a merry troop of under-devils, whoſe variety of ſtrange noiſes, diſtortions, and grimaces, made the fun grow faſt and furious. It was eſpecially agreeable to ſee his Satanic Majeſty well belaboured with clubs or cudgels, or hear him howl with pain, as he limped off maimed by the blow of ſome unuſually vigorous ſaint. It was a fine feat, too, to ſee the application of the red-hot pincers by St. Dunſtan to the noſe of Beelzebub; to ſee other ſaints of leſſer reputation and leſs refinement, ſpit in his face, or cut off pieces of his tail, which always replaced themſelves with the vitality of the Polypi. When miracle-plays and myſteries gave place to

the newer entertainment of "Moralities," the populace were made merry at the rebuffs or puniſhments which the allegorical characters of Pride, Avarice, and other vices or iniquities, received from Good Doctrine, Faith, Prudence, Charity, or ſome other of the Chriſtian virtues. "Iniquity," it is ſaid in the *Staple of Newes*, "came in like Hokos-pokos in a juggler's jerkin, with falſe ſkirts like the knave of clubs;" and complaint is made becauſe "Here is never a fiend to carry the Vice away; beſides he has never a wooden dagger; I'd not give a ruſh for a Vice that has not a wooden dagger to ſnap at every one he meetes."

A ſtage direction in one of the old plays ſays that Vice is to lay about him luſtily with a great pole, and tumble the characters one over the other with "great noiſe and riot, for dyſport ſake." There was uncouthneſs in all this merriment, no doubt; and our fathers were ſadly ignorant of the "genteel comedy" of the preſent day; but they went to their *al freſco* plays to laugh, and not, as their children too often go to the modern theatre, to yawn. Old Goffe, in his play of "The Careleſs Shepherdeſs," ſhows us that in his day they would not endure a piece on the ſtage that had not ſome food for laughter. Several characters are introduced upon the ſtage in the prologue, as waiting for the commencement of the performance. One of them ſays—

> Why, I would have a fool in every act,
> Be't comedy or tragedy: I've laugh'd
> Until I cry'd again, to see what faces
> The rogue will make. Oh! it does me good
> To see him hold out's chin, hang down his hands,

NOAH'S ARK—A DRAMATIC MYSTERY

> And twirle his bawble. * *
> * * * I heard a fellow
> Once on the ſtage cry doodle doodle dooe
> Beyond compare; I'd give th' other ſhilling
> To see him act the Changling once again.

His companion replies—

> And ſo would I; his part has all the wit,
> For none ſpeakes, carps, and quibbles beside him;
> I'd rather see him leap, or laugh, or cry,
> Than hear the graveſt ſpeech in all the play.
> I never ſaw Rheade peeping through the curtain,
> But raviſhing joy entered into my heart.

Then comes a boy upon the ſtage; the firſt ſpeaker inquires of him for the "Fool," and is told he will not perform that night, whereupon he ſays—

> Well, ſince there will be ne'er a fool i' the play,
> I'll have my money again; the comedy
> Will be as tedious to me as a ſermon.

Dearly did the merrie men of England love to ſee ſtrange ſights;—the taſte is not yet quite extinct among their deſcendants. Shakeſpeare knew the weakneſs of his countrymen in this reſpect, for Stephano, when meeting with Caliban on Proſpero's iſland, uncertain whether he is fiſh or man, is made to ſay, "Were I in England now as once I was, and had this fiſh painted, not a holiday fool there but would give me a piece of ſilver. There would this monſter make a man,—any ſtrange beaſt there makes a man." The place of myſteries, and miracle-plays, and moralities, was ſupplied

in later times by ſhows and puppet-plays. The glories of Bartholomew fair have departed, but an old hand-bill preſerved among the Harleian MSS. announces that—

"At Crawley's Booth, over againſt the Crown Tavern in Smithfield, during the time of Bartholomew Fair, will be preſented a little opera, called the Old Creation of the World, yet newly revived; with the addition of Noah's Flood; alſo ſeveral fountains playing water during the time of the play. The laſt ſcene does repreſent Noah and his family coming out of the Ark, with all the beaſts 2 by 2, and all the fowls of the air ſeen in a proſpect ſitting upon trees; likewiſe over the Ark is ſeen the ſun riſing in moſt glorious manner: moreover, a multitude of Angels will be ſeen in a double rank, which preſents a double proſpect, one for the ſun, the other for a palace, where will be ſeen ſix Angels ringing of bells. Likewiſe Machines deſcend from above, double and treble, with Dives riſing out of Hell, and Lazarus ſeen in Abraham's boſom, beſides ſeveral figures dancing jiggs, ſarabands, and country dances, to the admiration of the ſpectators; with the merry conceits of ſquire Punch and Sir John Spendall."

THE MANSIONS OF MERRIE ENGLAND.

WHILE the lower claſſes of England were happy in the good old times, thoſe who were above them in rank, and who poſſeſſed more of the bleſſings of fortune, they, too, were merry. The manſions of the old Engliſh gentlemen, the caſtles of the barons, and the abbeys of olden time, are they not inſeparably aſſociated with ideas of life free from cares and anxiety, and paſſed amid ſcenes of plenty, manly ſport, and healthy paſtime? Still among the moſt pictureſque beauties of our native land may be ſeen the manſions whoſe noble halls have witneſſed many a gay and feſtive ſcene, have rung with the joyous laugh, and echoed the ſimple ſtrain of the minſtrel in the bygone days of England.

The ſtately homes of England!
How beautiful they ſtand,
Amidſt their tall ancestral trees,
O'er all the pleaſant land!

The deer across their greensward bound,
Through shade and sunny glen;
And the swan glides past them with the sound
Of some rejoicing stream.

The days when the old Engliſh manſions were not ſubjected to the improving ſpirit and reforming taſte of the preſent times, are not ſeparated from us by any very long interval. Southey, in one of his Engliſh Eclogues, connects the paſt and preſent by the links of an old man's memory, and gives us at the ſame time one of the moſt pleaſing and natural pictures of gentle life and manners in theſe good old times. A young ſquire, juſt come into poſſeſſion of his eſtate, had begun to improve away all the old features of the hall and grounds; he had felled the trees, and altered the porch, and modernized the windows; made ſtraight the walks, and filled up the fiſh-pond. He accoſts a venerable man breaking the highway-ſtones, and the two enter into converſation upon the changes which are being effected in the old manſion-houſe,—changes ſo great, that the old man ſays:—

If my poor old lady could rise up—
God rest her soul!—'t would grieve her to behold
What wicked work is here.

* * * * *

Ay, master! fine old trees.
Lord bless us! I have heard my father say
His grandfather could just remember back,
When they were planted there. It was my task
To keep them trimmed, and 't was a pleasure to me.
My poor old lady many a time would come

And tell me where to clip, for she had played
In childhood under them, and 't was her pride
To keep them in their beauty.

* * * * *

I could as soon
Have ploughed my father's grave as cut them down.

STRANGER.

Come, come! all is not wrong;
Those old dark windows—

OLD MAN.

They're demolished too;
The very redbreasts that so regular
Came to my lady for her morning crumbs
Won't know the windows now.
There was a sweetbrier too that grew beside;
My lady loved at evening to sit there
And knit, and her old dog lay at her feet
And slept in the sun; 't was an old favourite dog;
She did not love him less that he was old
And feeble, and he always had a place
By the fireside; and when he died at last,
She made me dig a grave in the garden for him.
For she was good to all: a woeful day
'T was for the poor when to her grave she went.
. . . . . At Christmas, Sir!
It would have warmed your heart if you had seen
Her Christmas kitchen,—how the blazing fire
Made her fine pewter shine, and holly boughs
So cheerful red,—and as for mistletoe,
The finest bush that grew in the country round
Was marked for Madam. Then her old ale went
So bountiful about! A Christmas cask,
And 't was a noble one,—God help me, Sir!
But I shall never see such days again.

'Twas a gloomy view for that old man to take, and ſtone-breaking on the highways at fourſcore is not favourable to cheerful buoyancy of ſpirits. "New-fangled whimſies" had not, however, made the young ſquire forget the hoſpitality of his fathers who had gone before, and the old man's heart muſt have warmed towards the ſtranger when he replied—

'T would not be easy
To make you like the outside; but within,
That is not changed, my friend! you'll always find
The same old bounty and old welcome there.

Pleaſant it is to reflect that there are to be found ſome who, like the young ſquire, are ſtill reſolved to keep alive ſome of the good old inſtitutions and cuſtoms of their anceſtors. All honour to thoſe who thus reſpect the memories and imitate the conduct of their anceſtors, and who can ſympathiſe with Mrs. Howitt in her reverie on the old manſion of Lodore.

I think of some old country hall,
With carved porch and chimneys tall,
And pleasant windows many a one,
Set deep into the old grey stone.
Hid among trees so large and green,
'T is only dimly to be seen.
I think of its dusk garden bowers,
The little plot of curious flowers:
Its casements, wreathed with jessamine,
Flung wide to let all odours in;
And all sweet sounds of bird and bee,
And the cool fountains' melody;

THE OLD MANSION HOUSE.

For in gone years they of my race
Had 'mong the hills their dwelling-place:
In an old mansion that doth stand
As in the heart of fairy land.

In the "merrie days of England" Lullingſworth was a ſcene of joyous feſtivities, but Charles Mackay ſays of it now—

It is an ancient house.
Four hundred years ago
Men dug its basements deep,
And roof'd it from the wind;
And held within its walls
The joyous marriage feast,
The christening and the dance—

* * * *

Four hundred years ago
They scoop'd and fill'd the moat,
Where now the rank weeds grow,
And water-lilies vie
In whiteness with the swans,
A solitary pair,
That float, and feed, and float
Beneath the crumbling bridge,
And past the garden wall.

Four hundred years ago
They planted trees around,
To shield it from the sun;
And still those oaks and elms,
The patriarchs of the world,
Extend their sturdy boughs
To woo the summer breeze:
The old house ivy grown,
Red, green, and mossy gray,

Still lifts its gables quaint;
And in the evening sun
Its windows, as of yore,
Still gleam with ruddy light,
Reflected from the weſt.

Cloſely reſembling, by the intereſt they excite and the pleaſing aſſociations with which they are connected, are the few road-ſide inns that may ſtill be ſeen in ſome parts of the country. The ſcreaming locomotive now hurries along with its eager crowd of pleaſure-ſeekers, or its care-worn worſhippers of Mammon, high up on lofty embankments, or low down in deep cuttings or darkſome tunnels;—fields, trees, manſions, abbeys, caſtles, are paſſed; but what knows or cares thoſe helpleſs, train-bound throngs of the charms or beauties of thoſe rural ſcenes, as they haſten to the dreary ſtucco terminus to which they are booked? The village and the wayſide inn are deſerted;—happily, however, ſome few of them are reſcued from total oblivion by ſuch deſcriptions as that of the May-pole, by Charles Dickens, in his ſtory of "Barnaby Rudge:"—

"The May-pole was an old building with more gable ends than a lazy man would care to count on a ſunny day; huge zig-zag chimneys, out of which it ſeemed as though even ſmoke could not chooſe but come in more than naturally fantaſtic ſhapes imparted to it in its tortuous progreſs. The place was ſaid to have been built in the days of King Henry the Eighth; and there was a legend not only that Queen Elizabeth had ſlept there

one night while upon a hunting excurſion, but that next morning, while ſtanding on a mounting-block before the door, with one foot in the ſtirrup, the virgin monarch had then and there boxed and cuffed an unlucky page for ſome neglect of duty. The May-pole was really an old houſe, a very old houſe. Its windows were old diamond-pane lattices; its floors were ſunken and uneven; its ceilings blackened by the hand of time and heavy with maſſive beams. Over the doorway was an ancient porch, quaintly and groteſquely carved. With its overhanging ſtories, drowſy little panes of glaſs, and front bulging out and projecting over the pathway, the old houſe looked as if it were nodding in its ſleep. Indeed, it needed no very great ſtretch of fancy to detect in it other reſemblances to humanity. The bricks of which it was built had originally been a deep dark red, but had grown yellow and diſcoloured like an old man's ſkin; the ſturdy timber had decayed like teeth; and here and there the ivy, like a warm garment to comfort it in its age, wrapped its green leaves cloſely round the time-worn walls."

THE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.

THOSE who dwelt in the ancient manſions of England were a claſs of men proverbial for their hoſpitality. The fineſt ſketch we have of an old Engliſh gentleman is that which Chaucer has drawn of the Franklin who formed one of the troop of Canterbury pilgrims. The Franklin was one who uſually held the office of ſheriff and knight of the ſhire; he diſpenſed gratuitouſly among the people on his eſtate a rude patriarchal juſtice; he was ever hoſpitable, and gave a generous and cordial welcome to all who approached him. When he appeared in public, he wore a ſurcoat of red lined with blue, with bars or ſtripes of fringe or lace, a ſmall blue hat, turned up at the edges, and black boots; and—but Chaucer muſt himſelf introduce his inimitable type of an old Engliſh gentleman:—

White was his beard as is the daièsy,
Of his complexion he was sanguíne ;
Well lov'd he by the morrow a sop in wine.
To liven in delight was ever his wone,*
For he was Epicurus' owen son ;
That held opinïon that plain delight
Was verily felicity parfite.
A householder, and that a great was he ;
Saint Julian he was in his country,
His bread, his ale was always after one :
A better envínèd † man was no where none.
Withouten bak'd meat never was his house,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous ;
It snowèd, in his house, of meat and drink,
Of alle dainties that men could of think,
After the sundry seasons of the year :
So changed he his meat and his suppére.
Full many a fat partrídge had he in mew,
And many a bream and many a luce ‡ in stew.
Woe was his cook, but if his saucè were
Poignant and sharp, and ready all his gear.
His table dormant in his hall alway,
Stood ready cover'd all the longe day.
At sessïons there was he lord and sire ;
Full oftentime he was knight of the shire.
An anelace,§ and a gipcire ‖ all of silk,
Hung at his girdle, white as morrow milk.
A sheriff had he been, and a countour,
Was no where such a worthy vavasour.

In Knight's "Cabinet Pictures of Engliſh Life," the Franklin is thus drawn :—

"Over all the perſons on his eſtate,—harveſt-men, plough-drivers, ſhepherds, carters, ſwineherds, labourers of all claſſes,—

* Custom. † Good store of wine. ‡ Pike.
§ A knife worn at the belt. ‖ A purse.

the Franklin ſwayed a mild and affectionate deſpotiſm. No one upon his eſtate who was in health wanted employ and ample maintenance; none who were ill, failed to receive attentions and medicine, and generous and ſuitable food, from his lady or other members of his family. It was neceſſary this ſyſtem ſhould be exchanged; but we are now finding, by painful experience, that it was not neceſſary that *all* ſhould be ſwept away; not at leaſt till ſome equivalent had been found for the better part. In the nineteenth century, alas! theſe equivalents have yet to be diſcovered."

Deſcending a little later in the hiſtoric age of England, we ſtill find the ſame pleaſing idea preſented of the anceſtor of the "John Bull" of the preſent day. In the time of the Stuarts people recounted in their ballads the jovial merits and rare houſehold virtues of the fine old Engliſh gentlemen, ſome of whoſe ſons ſhowed, however, a diſpoſition not to walk in the good old ways; and the people then mourned over the change, as they "ſaw a new faſhioned hall built where the old one ſtood, and new fancies and whims introduced by young gallants, which their fathers knew not of." But the hearty old gentleman of Elizabeth's days was ever a popular favourite, and the people then ſang, as modern folks love to do,

> An old ſong made by an aged old pate,
> Of an old worſhipful gentleman, who had a greate eſtate,
> That kept a brave old houſe at a bountiful rate,
> And an old porter to relieve the poor at his gate;
> Like an old courtier of the queen's,
> And the queen's old courtier.

"AN OLD PORTER TO RELIEVE THE POOR AT HIS GATE."

With an old lady whose anger one word asswages ;
They every quarter paid their old servants their wages,
And never knew what belong'd to coachmen, footmen, nor pages ;
But kept twenty old fellows with blue coats and badges.

With an old study full of learned books,
With an old reverend chaplain, you might know him by his looks ;
With an old buttery hatch worn quite off the hooks,
And an old kitchen, that maintain'd half a dozen old cooks.

With an old hall hung about with pikes, guns, and bows,
With old swords, and bucklers, that had borne many shrewde blows ;
And an old frize coat, to cover his worship's trunk hose,
And a cup of old sherry, to comfort his copper nose.

With a good old fashion, when Christmasse was come,
To call in all his old neighbours with bagpipe and drum ;
With good chear enough to furnish every old room,
And old liquor able to make a cat speak and man dumb.

With an old falconer, huntsman, and a kennel of hounds,
That never hawked nor hunted but in his own grounds ;
Who, like a wise man, kept himself within his own bounds,
And when he dyed gave every child a thousand good pounds.

But to his eldest son his house and land assign'd,
Charging him in his will to keep the old bountifull mind,
To be good to his old tenants, and to his neighbours be kind.

* * * *

"A country gentleman," ſays Macaulay, "who witneſſed the Revolution was probably in receipt of about the fourth part of the rent which his acres now yield to his poſterity. He was, therefore, as compared with his poſterity, a poor man, and was generally under the neceſſity of reſiding, with little interruption,

on his eſtate. The heir of an eſtate often paſſed his boyhood and youth with no better tutors than grooms and gamekeepers, and ſcarce attained learning enough to ſign his name to a mittimus. His chief ſerious employment was the care of his property. He examined ſamples of grain, handled pigs, and on market-days made bargains over a tankard with drovers and hop-merchants. His table was loaded with coarſe plenty, and gueſts were cordially welcomed to it; but as the habit of drinking to exceſs was general in the claſs to which he belonged, and as his fortune did not enable him to intoxicate large aſſemblies daily with claret or canary, ſtrong beer was the ordinary beverage. It was only at great houſes, or on great occaſions, that foreign drink was placed on the board. The ladies of the houſe, whoſe buſineſs it had commonly been to cook the repaſt, retired as ſoon as the diſhes had been devoured, and left the gentlemen to their ale and tobacco. The coarſe jollity of the afternoon was often prolonged till the revellers were laid under the table. It was very ſeldom that the country gentleman caught glimpſes of the great world. His animoſities were numerous and bitter. He hated Frenchmen and Italians, Scotchmen and Iriſhmen, Papiſts and Preſbyterians, Independents and Baptiſts, Quakers and Jews. His wife and daughter were in taſte and acquirements below a houſekeeper or a ſtill-room maid of the preſent day. They ſtitched and ſpun, brewed gooſeberry wine, cured marigolds, and made the cruſt for the veniſon paſty. Unlettered as he was and unpoliſhed, he was ſtill in ſome moſt important points a gentleman."

In the Auguſtan age of our country the Engliſh gentleman was ſtill one of the moſt intereſting types of our national character; and in the writings of Addiſon we find that amiable individual thus deſcribed:—

"There is no character more deſervedly eſteemed than that of a country gentleman who underſtands the ſtation in which heaven and nature have placed him. He is a father to his tenants, a patron to his neighbours, and is ſuperior to thoſe of a lower fortune more by his benevolence than his poſſeſſions. He juſtly divides his time between ſolitude and company, ſo as to uſe the one for the other. His life is employed in the good offices of an advocate, a referee, a companion, a mediator, and a friend."

And in another part this type of national character is perſonified in the famous Sir Roger de Coverley. The brilliant eſſayiſt, while enjoying the hoſpitality of this genial member of the Spectator's Club, had opportunities of obſerving, at his reſidence, the charms of an Engliſh country gentleman's life.

"I am more at eaſe," writes Addiſon, "in Sir Roger's family, becauſe it conſiſts of ſober and ſtaid perſons; for as the knight is the beſt maſter in the world, he ſeldom changes his ſervants; and as he is beloved by all about him, his ſervants never care for leaving him; by this means his domeſtics are all in years, and grown old with their maſter. You would take his valet-de-chambre for his brother; his butler is grey-headed; his groom is one of the graveſt men that I have ever ſeen, and his coachman has the looks of a privy-councillor. You ſee the goodneſs of the maſter

even in the old houſe-dog, and in a grey pad that is kept in the ſtable with great care and tenderneſs out of regard to his paſt ſervices, though he has been uſeleſs for ſeveral years.

"I could not but obſerve with a great deal of pleaſure the joy that appeared in the countenances of theſe ancient domeſtics upon my friend's arrival at his country-ſeat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the ſight of their old maſter; every one of them preſſed forward to do ſomething for him, and ſeemed diſcouraged if they were not employed. At the ſame time the good old knight, with a mixture of the father and the maſter of the family, tempered the inquiries after his own affairs with ſeveral kind queſtions relating to themſelves. This humanity and good nature engages everybody to him, ſo that when he is pleaſant upon any of them, all his family are in good humour, and none ſo much as the perſon whom he diverts himſelf with: on the contrary, if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of old age, it is eaſy for a ſtander-by to obſerve a ſecret concern in the looks of all his ſervants."

HUNTING AND HAWKING.

ABOUT the middle of the ſeventeenth century, Burton wrote in his Anatomy of Melancholy that "Hunting and Hawking are honeſt recreations, and fit for ſome great men, but not for every baſe inferior perſon, who while they maintain their faulkoner, and dogs, and hunting nags, their wealth runs away with their hounds, and their fortunes fly away with their hawks;" and that "riding of great horſes, running at rings, tilts and tournaments, horſe races, and wild gooſe chaſes, are diſports of greater men, and good in themſelves, though many gentlemen by ſuch means gallop quite out of their fortunes." A character introduced in the Corniſh Comedy, written and acted by Powell in 1696, is made to ſay, "What is a gentleman without his recreations? With theſe we endeavour to paſs away the

time which otherwiſe would lie heavily upon our hands. Hawks, hounds, and ſetting dogs, are the true marks of a country gentleman." The citizens of London poſſeſſed in the olden time extenſive privileges for hunting, hawking, and fiſhing; and ſo late as the reign of the firſt of the Georges, the citizens were wont to enjoy themſelves with "riding on horſeback and hunting with my Lord Mayor's hounds when the common hunt goes out." From the earlieſt period of our hiſtory there exiſts evidence of the love of the people for the pleaſures of the chaſe. In the twelfth century John of Saliſbury wrote, that in his time hunting and hawking were "eſteemed the moſt honourable employments and moſt excellent virtues by our nobility, and they think it the height of worldly felicity to ſpend the whole of their time in theſe diverſions." Gaſton Earl of Foix kept ſix hundred dogs in his caſtle for the purpoſe of hunting. The biſhops and clergy were not leſs great hunters, and it is recorded of one Walter, Biſhop of Rocheſter, that he was ſo fond of the ſport that "at the age of fourſcore he made hunting his ſole employment, to the total neglect of the duties of his office." The great Queen Elizabeth was not leſs fond of the ſport than the venerable prelate of Rocheſter; for when in her ſeventy-ſeventh year, it was written of her by a courtier to Sir Robert Sidney,—"Her Majeſty is well, and excellently diſpoſed to hunting, for every ſecond day ſhe is on horſeback, and continues the ſport long."

This love of the chaſe has been preſerved to the preſent day, and the great number of hunting ſongs which are to be found

HUNTING THE STAG.

in the ballad literature of our country, atteſts the popularity of the ſport. Our fathers loved to hear the foreſt muſic of the hounds

> Rend the thin air, and with a lusty cry
> Awake the drowsy echo, and confound
> Their perfect language in a mingled voice.

Scott has drawn this vivid and animated ſketch of the ſport which our anceſtors loved:—

> Waken, lords and ladies gay,
> On the mountain dawns the day,
> All the jolly chase is here,
> With horse, and hawk, and hunting spear;
> Hounds are in their couples yelling,
> Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling;
> Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
> "Waken, lords and ladies gay."
>
> Waken, lords and ladies gay,
> The mist has left the mountain grey;
> Springlets in the dawn are streaming,
> Diamonds on the brake are gleaming;
> And foresters have busy been
> To track the buck in thicket green;
> Now we come to chant our lay,
> "Waken, lords and ladies gay."
>
> Waken, lords and ladies gay,
> To the greenwood haste away;
> We can show you where he lies,
> Fleet of foot, and tall of size;

We can show the marks he made
When 'gainst the oak his antlers fray'd;
You shall see him brought to bay,—
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder chant the lay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay;"
Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee
Run a course as well as we;
Time, stern huntsman, who can baulk,
Stanch as hound, and fleet as hawk?
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

And when the cheerful ſummons was obeyed, the ſportſman ſang the merry ſong which Douce wrote:—

The hunt is up, the hunt is up!
Sing merrily we the hunt is up;
The birds they sing,
The deer they fling,
Hey, nonny, nony, no!
The hounds they cry,
The hunters fly,
Hey, trolilo, trololilo!
The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
Sing merrily we the hunt is up.

The wood resounds
To hear the sounds,
Hey, nonny, nony, no!
The rocks report
This merry sport,
Hey, trolilo, trololilo!
The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
Sing merrily we the hunt is up.

Then hie apace
Unto the chace,
Hey, nonny, nony, no!
While every thing
Doth sweetly sing,
Hey, trolilo, trololilo!
The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
Sing merrily we the hunt is up.

In later times, the merry song of the hunters is heard in the well-known lines of O'Keefe, and the fine hunting song which follows:—

Bright chanticleer proclaims the dawn,
And spangles deck the thorn,
The lowing herds now quit the lawn,
The lark springs from the corn:
Dogs, huntsmen, round the window throng,
Fleet Towler leads the cry;
Arise the burden of my song,—
"This day a stag must die."

The cordial takes its merry round,
The laugh and joke prevail;
The huntsman blows a jovial sound,
The dogs snuff up the gale;
The upland wilds they sweep along,
O'er fields, through brakes they fly;
The game is roused; too true the song—
"This day a stag must die."

'T was rosy morn when chaste Diana bright,
From balmy slumbers springing light,
Waked all her nymphs from pleasing rest,
And thus her sylvan train address'd:

"From this high mount with me descend,
And now to the joys of the chace;
O'er hills and dales our flight we bend,
And match the fleet stag in our pace.

"My silver bow is ready strung,
My golden quiver graceful hung,—
Away, my nymphs, away;
Let shouts to the welkin resound,
And she who strikes the destined prey,
Shall Queen of the Forest be crown'd."

Thoſe who moſt enjoyed ſuch ſport in the time of the Stuarts were men like the one thus deſcribed by William Gilpin.

"Mr. Haſtings was low of ſtature, but ſtrong and active; of a ruddy complexion, with flaxen hair. His clothes were always of green cloth. His houſe was of the old faſhion, in the midſt of a large park well ſtocked with deer, rabbits, and fiſh-ponds. He had a long narrow bowling-green in it, and uſed to play with round ſand-bowls. Here, too, he had a banqueting-room built, like a ſtand in a large tree. He kept all ſorts of hounds that ran buck, fox, hare, otter, and badger; and had hawks of all kinds, both long and ſhort winged. His great hall was commonly ſtrewed with marrow-bones, and full of hawk-perches, hounds, ſpaniels, and terriers; the upper end of it was hung with fox-ſkins of this and laſt year's killing. Here and there a polecat was intermixed, and hunters' poles in great abundance. The parlour was a large room, completely furniſhed in the ſame ſtyle. On a broad hearth, paved with brick, lay ſome of the choiceſt terriers,

hounds, and ſpaniels. One or two of the great chairs had litters of cats in them, which were not to be diſturbed. Of theſe three or four always attended him at dinner, and a little white wand lay by his trencher to defend it if they were too troubleſome.

"In the windows—which were very large—lay his arrows, croſſ-bows, and other accoutrements. The corners of the room were filled with his beſt hunting and hawking poles. His oyſter-table ſtood at the lower end of the room, which was in conſtant uſe twice a day, all the year round, for he never failed to eat oyſters, both at dinner and ſupper, with which the neighbouring town of Pool ſupplied him. At the upper end of the room ſtood a ſmall table with a double deſk, one ſide of which held a Church Bible, the other a Book of Martyrs. On different tables of the room lay hawks'-hoods, bells, old hats, with their crowns thruſt in, full of pheaſant eggs, tables, dice, cards, and a ſtore of tobacco pipes. At the end of this room was a door which opened into a cloſet, where ſtood bottles of ſtrong beer and wine, which never came out but in ſingle glaſſes, which was the rule of the houſe; for he never exceeded himſelf, nor permitted others to exceed. Anſwering to this cloſet, was a door into an old chapel, which had long been diſuſed for devotion: but in the pulpit, as the ſafeſt place, was always to be found a cold ſhin of beef, a veniſon-paſty, a gammon of bacon, or a great apple pie, with thick cruſt, well baked. His table coſt him not much, but it was good to eat at. His ſports ſupplied all but beef and mutton, except on Fridays, when he had the beſt of fiſh. He never wanted a London pudding, and he

always ſang it in with 'My part lies therein-a.' He drank a glaſs or two of wine, put ſyrup of gilly-flowers into his ſack, and had always a tun-glaſs of ſmall beer ſtanding by him, which he often ſtirred about with roſemary. He lived to be an hundred, and never loſt his eyeſight, nor uſed ſpectacles. He got on horſeback without help, and rode to the death of the ſtag till paſt fourſcore."

It was of this veteran Engliſh ſportſman, that Sir Egerton Brydges wrote,—

> Old Harry Hastings! of thy forest life
> How whimsical, how picturesque the charms;
> Yet it was sensual! With thy hounds and horn
> How cheerily didst thou salute the morn!
> With airy steed didst thou pursue thy strife,
> Sounding through all the woodland glades alarms;
> Sunk not a dell, and not a thicket grew,
> But thy skill'd eye and long experience knew.
> The herds were thy acquaintance; antler'd deer
> Knew when to trust thy voice, and when to fear;
> And through the shadowy oaks of giant size,
> Thy bugle could the distant sylvans hear,
> And wood-nymphs from their bowery bed would rise,
> And echoes dancing round repeat their ecstasies.

While the pleaſures of the chaſe have deſcended to our own time, the ſifter ſport of hawking, which was practiſed in the "merrie dayes" of England, has become obſolete. So intimately were the two deſcriptions of ſport connected, that Strutt ſays, "Perſons of high rank rarely appeared without their dogs and their hawks; the latter they carried with them when they journeyed

from one country to another, and would not part with them to procure their own liberty when taken priſoners. They were conſidered as enſigns of nobility; and no action could be reckoned more diſhonourable to a man of rank than to give up his hawk." Nay, their owners would not be ſeparated from them even when they attended the ſervices of the church, for we hear Barclay complaining, at the cloſe of the fifteenth century, that

> Into the church then comes another sotte,
> Withouten devotion, jetting up and down,
> Or to be seene, and showe his garded cote.
> Another on his fist, a sparhawke or fawcone,
> Or else a cokow; wasting so his shone;
> Before the aulter, he to and fro doth wander,
> With even as great devotion as doth a gander.

In theſe times, when it was thought ſufficient for noblemen "to winde their horne and to carry their hawk fair, and leave ſtudy and learning to their children," the accompliſhed Sir Triſtram makes it his boaſt in Spenſer, that

> Ne is there hawk which mantleth her on pearch,
> Whether high tow'ring or accoasting low,
> But I the measure of her flight doth search,
> And all her prey, and all her diet know.

All claſſes enjoyed the ſport of hawking, but its great expenſe cauſed the occupation to be almoſt excluſively confined to royal perſonages, the nobility, and the biſhops and clergy. In the time of James I., one thouſand pounds were given for a caſt of (two) hawks.

Ladies frequently joined in this exciting ſport; and the oldeſt work upon hawking extant in the preſent day, is the one written

by the Prioreſs of Sopewell Nunnery, near St. Alban's—Dame Juliana Berners; called "The Treatyſes pertayninge to Hawkynge, Huntynge, and Fyſſhynge with an Angle, and alſo a right noble Treatyſe of the Lygnage of Col Armours, endynge with a Treatyſe which ſpecyfyeth of Blaſynge of Armys." This work contains ſome marvellous remedies for the ills and ailments to which hawks appeared to be ſubject. In one very old manuſcript, the owner of a hawk that has been ill and has ſufficiently recovered to purſue the game is thus admoniſhed:—"On the morrow tyde when thou goeſt out to hawkynge, ſay, 'In the name of the Lord, the birds of Heaven ſhall be beneath thy feet;' alſo, if he be hurt by the heron, ſay, 'The lion of the tribe of Judah the root of David has conquered; Hallelujah!' and if he be bite of any man, ſay, 'He that the wicked man doth bind, the Lord at his coming ſhall ſet free.'"

Shakeſpeare thoroughly underſtood the power of the falconer when he makes the pure and graceful Juliet, ſighing for the return of her lover, ſay

> Oh for a falconer's voice,
> To lure this tassel-gentle back again!

In the conference between the angler, the hunter, and the falconer, with which Izaak Walton commences his famous work, wherein each commends his particular recreation, the falconer is made to ſay in praiſe of the ſport which he profeſſes:—

"And firſt for the Element that I uſe to trade in, which is the Air, an Element of more worth than weight,—an Element that

HAWKING.

doubtleſs exceeds both the Earth and the Water; for though I ſometimes deal in both, yet the Air is more properly mine. I and my Hawks uſe that moſt, and it yields us moſt recreation; it ſtops not the high ſoaring of my noble generous Falcon; in it ſhe aſcends to ſuch a height as the dull eyes of beaſts and fiſh are not able to reach to: their bodies are too groſs for ſuch high elevations. In the air my troop of hawks ſoar up on high, and when they are loſt in the ſight of men, then they attend upon and converſe with the gods; therefore I think my Eagle is ſo juſtly ſtyled Jove's ſervant in ordinary; and that very Falcon that I am now going to ſee deſerves no meaner a title, for ſhe uſually, in her flight, endangers herſelf, like the ſon of Dædalus, to have her wings ſcorched by the Sun's heat, ſhe flies ſo near it; but her mettle makes her careleſs of danger, for ſhe then heeds nothing, but makes her nimble pinions cut the fluid air, and ſo makes her highway over the ſteepeſt mountains and deepeſt rivers, and in her glorious career looks with contempt upon thoſe high Steeples and magnificent Palaces which we adore and wonder at; from which height I can make her to deſcend by a word from my mouth (which ſhe both knows and obeys) to accept of meat from my hand, to own me for her maſter, to go home with me, and be willing the next day to afford me the like recreation."

There is a ſtory told of a depoſed Scottiſh queen, who, anxious to preſerve her ſon from the traitors who had made herſelf a widow and her child an orphan, exchanged him with the daughter of a faithful friend; and in order to avoid detection in any communica-

tions which they might have with each other relative to their children, the parents agreed to adopt the terms uſed in hawking,—

> And you shall learn, my gay goss hawk,
> Right well to breast a steed;
> And so will I, your turtle dow,
> As well to write and read.
>
> And ye shall learn, my gay goss hawk,
> To wield both bow and brand;
> And so will I, your turtle dow,
> To lay gowd with her hand.
>
> At kirk or market when we meet,
> We'll dare make no avow;
> But "Dame, how does my gay goss hawk?"
> "Madame, how does my dow?"

The accompliſhments which Roland Graeme avowed to Catherine that he poſſeſſed, were that he could "fly a hawk, halloa to a hound, back a horſe, and wield lance, bow, and brand;" and every one is familiar with the good and honeſt old Adam Blackcock the falconer, introduced in the ſtory of "The Betrothed." Highly exhilarating was this ſport of falconry, as the company went galloping over hill and dale, with many daring feats of horſemanſhip; or, when on foot, leaping with the hawking-poles over ditches and watercourſes in order to follow the flight of the hawk. Oh! 'twas royal ſport—

> Then for an evening flight,
> A tiercel gentle, which I call, my masters,
> As he were sent a messenger to the moon,
> In such a place flies, as he seems to say,

See me, or see me not! The partridge ſprung,
He makes his ſtoop; but, wanting breath, is forced
To cancelier; then, with ſuch ſpeed, as if
He carried lightning in his wings, he ſtrikes
The trembling bird, who even in death appears
Proud to be made his quarry.

The grand falconer, too, in full dreſs, with his falcon perched on his wriſt, was a moſt pictureſque-looking individual; and his attendants, bearing the perches for the hooded birds, made up a buſy, animated, and excited group. But the ſport of hawking, like that of archery, gave way to other purſuits; and the fowling-piece ſuperſeded the hooded hawk, which, ſince the days of Alfred, had been held in ſuch high eſteem by the gentle-born and chivalrous ſpirits of "Old England."

ANGLING.

AMONG the varied amuſements and occupations of our anceſtors, there are none which has more votaries in the preſent day than that to which Izaak Walton was ſo devotedly attached, and which he deſcribed on the title-page of his "Compleat Angler," of 1653, as "the contemplative man's recreation." Many a pleaſant picture of this ſport is to be found ſcattered among the poets and proſe writers of paſt times; but towering above them all ſtand the works of that great maſter of his craft, whom "neither blandiſhment nor obſtacle could ſwerve from his mighty end when he went forth to kill fiſh"—old Izaak, ſo gentle and ſo good, who entreated his diſciples always to put the worm "tenderly" on the hook:—

He was the great progenitor of all
That war upon the tenants of the stream;
He neither stumbled, stopt, nor had a fall
When he essay'd to war on dace, bleek, bream,
Stone-loach, or pike, or other fish, I deem.

We have often fancied that the good man believed he had ſomething of a divine call to his work; the motto which he prefixed to his "Diſcourſe of Fiſh and Fiſhing," was "Simon Peter ſaid, *I go a fiſhing;* and they ſaid, We alſo will go with thee." There is not a prettier ſcene recorded in Engliſh literature, than that of the two companions, Venator and Piſcator, on the banks of the gentle Lea;—

VEN. On my word, master, this is a gallant trout; what shall we do with him?

PISC. Marry, e'en eat him to supper. We'll go to my hostess, from whence we came; she told me, as I was going out of door, that my brother Peter, a good angler and a cheerful companion, had sent word he would lodge there to-night, and bring a friend with him. My hostess has two beds, and I know you and I may have the best. We'll rejoice with my brother Peter and his friend, tell tales, or sing ballads, or make a catch, or find some harmless sport to content us, and pass away a little time without offence to God or man.

VEN. A match, good master: let's go to that house, for the linen looks white, and smells of lavender, and I long to lie in a pair of sheets that smell so. Let's be going, good master, for I am hungry again with fishing.

PISC. Nay, stay a little, good scholar. I caught my last trout with a worm; now I will put on a minnow, and try a quarter of an hour about yonder trees for another, and so walk towards our lodgings. Look you, scholar, thereabout we shall have a bite presently, or not at all. Have with you, sir, o' my word I have hold of him. Oh, it is a great logger-headed Chub! Come, hang him upon that willow twig, and let's be going. But turn out of the way a little, good scholar, towards yon high honeysuckle hedge; there we'll sit and sing while this shower falls so gently on the teeming earth, and gives yet a sweeter smell to the lovely flowers that adorn these verdant meadows.

Look! under that broad beech-tree I sat down when I was last this way a fishing, and the birds in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow tree,

near the brow of that primrose hill; there I sat viewing the silver streams glide silently toward their centre, the tempestuous sea; but sometimes opposed by rugged roots and pebble-stones which broke their waves and turned them into foam; and sometimes I beguiled time by viewing the harmless lambs—some leaping securely in the cool shade, while others sported themselves in the cheerful sun; and saw others craving comfort from the swollen udders of their bleating dams. As I thus sat, these and other sights had so fully possessed my soul with content, that I thought, as the poet as happily expressed it,

> I was for that time lifted above earth,
> And possess'd joys not promised in my birth.

As I left the place and entered into the next field, a second pleasure entertained me; it was a handsome milk-maid, that had not yet attained so much age and wisdom as to load her mind with any fears of many things that will never be, as too many men too often do; but she cast away all care and sang like a nightingale. Her voice was good and the ditty fitted for it; it was that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlow, now at least fifty years ago; and the milk-maid's mother sang an answer to it, which was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in his younger days. They were old fashioned poetry, but choicely good; I think much better than the strong lines that are now in fashion in this critical age. Look yonder! on my word, they both be a milking again. I will give her the Chub, and persuade them to sing those two songs again.

And the milk-maid ſang with a merry heart that choice ſong, "Come, live with me and be my love,"—and Venator beſtowed upon the honeſt, innocent, pretty Maudlin that bleſſing of Sir Thomas Overbury, "That ſhe may die in the ſpring, and being dead, may have good ſtore of flowers ſtuck round about her winding-ſheet." And the mother ſang in reply—

> If that the world and love were young,
> And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
> These pretty pleasures might me move,
> To live with thee and be thy love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold ;
Then Philomel becometh dumb,
And age complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields,
To wayward winter reckoning yields ;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,—
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
The coral clasps and amber studs ;
All these in me no means can move,
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed ;
Had joys no date, nor age no need ;
Then those delights my mind might move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

What a pleaſant concluſion to the day's ſport was that viſit to Bleak Hall! and what a picture of contented happineſs and delicious comfort there is in the deſcription of that "honeſt ale-houſe, where would be found a cleanly room, lavender in the windows, and twenty ballads ſtuck about the walls; with a hoſteſs both cleanly, handſome, and civil." Well might Izaak and his companion ſay,

Oh, how happy's here our leisure!
Oh, how innocent our pleasure!
Oh, ye valleys; oh, ye mountains;
Oh, ye groves and crystal fountains;
How I love at liberty
By turns to come and visit ye!

Let us not forget that this art of "Angling" was diſcourſed of in one of the earlieſt books that were printed in this country, by Wynkyn de Wode; and what is not leſs remarkable is, that the work was written by a lady,—one whoſe learning and accompliſhments have been praiſed by Leland, Bale, and others. She was the ſame who wrote on Hawking; and ſhe publiſhed the ſeveral treatiſes in one volume for the reaſons thus given:—

"And for by cauſe that this preſent treatyſe ſholde not come to the hondys of eche ydle perſone whyche wolde deſire it, yf it were emprynted allone by itſelf, and put in a lytyll plaunflet; therfore I have compyled it in a greter volume of dyverſe bokys, concernynge to gentyll and noble men, to the entent that the forſayde ydle perſones whyche ſholde haue but lytyll meſure in the ſayd dyſporte of fyſſhynge ſholde not by this meane utterely dyſtroye it."

Dame Juliana Berners, Prioreſs of the Nunnery of Sopewell, ſays in praiſe of her favourite ſport, greatly preferable, in her opinion, to hawking, or hunting, or fowling, becauſe if his ſport fail him—

"The angler atte the leeſt hathe hys holſom walke and mery at his eaſe, a ſwete ayre, of the ſwete ſauoure of the meede flouers

that makyth him hungry; he hereth the melodyous armony of fowles; he ſeeth the yonge ſwannes, heerons, duckes, cotes, and many other fowles, with theyr brodes; whyche me ſemyth better than alle the noyſe of houndys, the blaſtes of hornys, and the ſcrye of foulis that hunter fawkeners and fowlers can make. And if the Angler take fyſſhe, ſurely, thenne, is there noe man merier than he is in his ſpyryte."

Among the many directions which the good prioreſs gave to her readers in the fifteenth century, we extract only the following rules for taking pike, which ſhow how practical was her knowledge, and how genuine her love of the ſport:—

"Take a froſhe (frog) and put it on your hoke at the necke betweene the ſkynne and the body, on the backe halfe, and put on a flote a yarde therefro', and caſte it where the pike haunteth, and you ſhall haue hym. Another manere;—Take the ſame bayte and put it in as a fetida, and caſte it in the water wyth a corde and a corke, and ye ſhall not fayl of hym. And yf ye lyſt to have a gode ſporte thenne, tye the corde to a goſe fote (gooſe's foot), and ye ſhall ſe gode haulynge whether the goſe or the pike ſhall haue the better."

The lady entertained the opinion that Walton, many years after, adopted in his work, that angling "was the contemplative man's recreation," for ſhe counſels:—

"Alſo ye ſhall not uſe this forſayde crafty dyſporte for no couetyſeneſs, to the encreaſynge and ſparynge of your money only; but pryncypally for your ſolace, and to cauſe the helthe of your

body, and ſpecyally of your ſoule; for whenne ye purpoos to goo on your dyſportes in fyſſhynge, ye woll not deſyre gretly manie perſones wyth you whyche myghte lette you of your game. And thenne you may ſerue Godde deuowtly in ſayenge affectuouſly youre cuſtomable prayer, and thus doynge ye ſhalle eſchew and voyde many vices."

In later times we find that the gentler ſex were invited to ſhare in the pleaſures of angling, and Bellman thus ſummons his Amaryllis to the ſport:—

Waken, thou fair one! up, Amaryllis!
Morning so still is;
Cool is the gale:
The rainbow of heaven,
With its hues seven,
Brightness hath given
To wood and dale.
Sweet Amaryllis, let me convey thee;
In Neptune's arms nought shall affray thee;
Sleep's god no longer power has to stay thee,
Over thy eyes and speech to prevail.

Come out a-fishing; nets forth are carrying;
Come without tarrying,
Hasten with me.
Jerkin and vail in—
Come for the sailing,
For trout and grayling:
Baits will lay we.
Awake, Amaryllis! dearest, awaken;
Let me not go forth by thee forsaken;
Our course among dolphins and sirens taken,
Onward shall paddle our boat to the sea.

AN ANGLER'S MORNING.

John Donne, too, in a manner not unworthy of "Kit Marlowe," has the pretty conceit:—

Come, live with me and be my love,
And we will some new pleasures prove,
Of golden sands and crystal brooks,
With silken lines and silver hooks.

There will the river whispering run,
Warm'd by thine eyes more than the sun;
And there th' enamour'd fish will stay,
Begging themselves they may betray.

Let others freeze with angling reeds,
And cut their legs with shells and weeds;
Or, curious traitors, sleave silk flies,
Bewitch poor fishes' wand'ring eyes:

For thee thou need'st no such deceit,
For thou thyself art thine own bait;
That fish that is not catch'd thereby,
Alas! is wiser far than I.

There are ſome modern anglers who affect to deſpiſe the good old rules and maxims of the gentle art laid down by Izaak Walton. The indefatigable Hone has preſerved in his "Every Day Book" a letter from a correſpondent who met a ſucceſsful angler on that beautiful ſtream in Derbyſhire, the Dove, whoſe baſket was filled with the trout which he had taken.

"'I aſked him,' ſays the writer, 'if he had read "Walton's Complete Angler."' Yes, he had it, and turning to me with an air of immenſe importance, ſaid, 'If he was alive now, he could

not take a ſingle fiſh.' 'No,' I replied, 'how is that? He *could* take plenty in his day; and though I do not deny that there may have been great improvements in the art, yet ſkill then ſucceſsful would be equally ſo *now*, unleſs there has been a revolution amongſt the fiſh, and they have grown wiſer.' 'Ay, there you have it,' he added; 'the fiſh are wiſer, they won't take the ſame baits.' I inſtinctively glanced at the bait then upon the hook of my oracle, and—heaven and earth! it was Walton's favourite bait, the drake fly."

Whatever may be the cauſe, the ſport of angling does not now as a general rule yield ſuch good and profitable returns as in old times. At the old Sluice Houſe, in comparatively modern days, ſome good ſport was to be had; now the *genius loci* ſings,

> Ye who with rod and line aspire to catch
> Leviathans that swim within the stream
> Of this famed *River*, now no longer *New*,
> Yet still so called, come to the Sluice House.
> Here largest gudgeon live, and fattest roach
> Resort, and even barbel have been found.
> Here, too, does sometimes prey the rav'ning shark
> Of streams like this, that is to say, a jack.
> If fortune aid ye, ye perchance shall find,
> Upon an average within one day,
> At least a fish or two; if ye do not,
> This will I promise ye, that ye shall have
> Most glorious nibbles; come then, haste ye here,
> And with ye bring large stocks of baits and—patience.

JOUSTS AND TOURNAMENTS.

WE learn from Fitz Stephen that ſeven centuries ago it was the cuſtom on every Sunday in Lent, immediately after dinner, for "great crowds of young Londoners, mounted on war horſes well trained to perform the neceſſary turnings and evolutions, to ride into the fields in diſtinct bands, armed, *haſtelibus ferro dempto*, with ſhields and headleſs lances; where they exhibited the repreſentation of battles, and went through a variety of warlike exerciſes; at the ſame time many of the young noblemen who had not received the honour of knighthood, came from the king's court, and from the houſes of the great barons, to make trial of their ſkill in arms, the hope of victory animating their minds. The youth being divided into oppoſite companies, encountered one another: in one place they fled, and others purſued, without being able to overtake them; in another place one of the bands overtook and overturned the other." Theſe diverſions in which the citizens indulged became afterwards the excluſive ſport of the nobility,

and all under the rank of eſquires were prohibited from taking part in jouſt or tournament. The firſt Richard made laws and regulations for the conduct of grand tournaments, which were announced to the world in theſe terms:—

"Hear now, lords, knights, and eſquires, ladies and gentlewomen; you are hereby acquainted that a ſuperb achievement at arms and a grand and noble tournament will be held in the parade of Clarencieux king-at-arms, on the part of the moſt noble baron, lord of ——, and on the part of the moſt noble baron, the lord of ——, in the parade of Norrais king-at-arms. The two barons on whoſe parts the tournament is undertaken ſhall be at their pavilions two days before the commencement of the ſports, when each of them ſhall cauſe his arms to be nailed to his pavilion, and ſet up his banner in the front of his parade; and all thoſe who wiſh to be admitted as combatants on either ſide muſt in like manner ſet up their arms and banners before the parades allotted to them. Upon the evening of the ſame day they ſhall ſhow themſelves in their ſtations, and expoſe their helmets to view at the windows of their pavilions; and then they may depart to make merry, dance, and live well."

On the appointed day, the heralds ſummoned the barons and knights to the liſts, crying aloud, "To achievement, knights and eſquires, to achievement!" and ſhortly after this firſt notice the company of heralds again went to the pavilions, crying out, "Come forth, knights and eſquires, come forth!" In obedience to the ſummons, the combatants placed themſelves in the liſts, "each

armed with a pointleſs ſword having the edges rebated, and with a baſton or truncheon hanging from their ſaddles, and they may uſe either the one or the other ſo long as the ſpeakers ſhall give them permiſſion by repeating the ſentence, 'Laiſſer les aler.'" The award of the prizes for the ſucceſsful combatants was reſerved always to "the queenes highneſs and the ladyes there preſent."

Theſe tournaments were conducted with great diſplay and magnificence. Strutt ſays, "At the celebration of theſe paſtimes, the liſts were ſuperbly decorated and ſurrounded by the pavilions belonging to the champions, ornamented with their arms, banners, and banerolls. The ſcaffolds for the reception of the nobility of both ſexes, who came as ſpectators, and thoſe eſpecially appointed for the royal family, were hung with tapeſtry and embroideries of gold and ſilver. Every perſon, upon ſuch occaſions, appeared to the greateſt advantage, decked in ſumptuous array, and every part of the field preſented to the eye a rich diſplay of magnificence. We may alſo add the ſplendid appearance of the knights engaged in the ſports; themſelves and their horſes were moſt gorgeouſly arrayed, and their eſquires and pages, together with the minſtrels and heralds who ſuperintended the ceremonies, were all of them clothed in coſtly and glittering apparel. Such a ſhow of pomp, where wealth, beauty, and grandeur were concentrated as it were in one focus, muſt altogether have formed a wonderful ſpectacle, and made a ſtrong impreſſion on the mind, which was not a little heightened by the cries of the heralds, the clangour of the trumpets, the claſhing of the arms, the ruſhing

together of the combatants, and the ſhouts of the beholders; and hence the popularity of theſe exhibitions may be eaſily accounted for. The tournament and the jouſt, eſpecially the latter, afforded to thoſe who were engaged in them an opportunity of appearing before ladies to the greateſt advantage; they might at once diſplay their taſte and opulence by the coſtlineſs and elegancy of their apparel, and their proweſs as ſoldiers; therefore theſe paſtimes became faſhionable among the nobility; and it was probably for the ſame reaſon that they were prohibited to the commoners."

But though the commoners might not take part in the ſports, they were permitted to be preſent at their celebration; and when it was ſpread that at Sarum, or Wilton, or Warwick, or Kenilworth, or Stamford, or Wallingford, or Brakeley, or Mixeburg, or Blye, or Tykehill—the places appointed by royal ordinance for ſuch ſports,—a tournament would take place, then occurred ſuch a ſcene as that which Thornbury has recently ſo graphically deſcribed in his ballads—it was the Derby-day of Old England:—

Pilgrims with their hood and cowl,
Purſy burghers cheek by jowl;
Archers with the peacock's wing
Fitting to the waxen ſtring.
Pedlars with their pack and bags,
Beggars with their coloured rags,
Silent monks, whoſe ſtony eyes
Reſt in trance upon the ſkies,
Children ſleeping at the breaſt,
Merchants from the diſtant Weſt,

All in gay confusion went
To the Royal Tournament.

Players with the painted face
And a drunken man's grimace;
Grooms who praise their raw-boned steeds,
Old wives telling maple beads:
Blackbirds from the hedges broke,
Black crows from the beeches croak;
Glossy swallows in dismay
From the mill-stream fled away;
The angry swan, with ruffled breast
Frown'd upon her osier nest;
The wren hopp'd restless on the brake,
The otter made the sedges shake;
The butterfly before our rout,
Flew like a blossom blown about;
The colour'd leaves, a globe of life,
Spun round and scatter'd as in strife,
Sweeping down the narrow lane
Like the slant showers of the rain;
The lark in terror from the sod
Flew up and straight appeal'd to God;
As a noisy band we went,
Trotting to the Tournament.

This ſpectacle was ſuch an one, perhaps, as that which Scott has deſcribed in the "Taliſman."

The Baptist's fair morrow beheld gallant feats—
There was winning of honour, and losing of seats—
There was hewing with falchions, and splintering of staves,
The victors won glory, the vanquish'd won graves.
O, many a knight there fought bravely and well,
Yet one was accounted his peers to excel,
And 't was he whose sole armour on body and breast,
Seem'd the weed of a damsel when bourne for her rest.

There were some dealt him wounds that were bloody and sore,
But others respected his plight and forbore.
"It is some oath of honour," they said, "and I trow,
'T were unknightly to slay him achieving his vow."
Then the Prince, for his sake, bade the tournament cease,
He flung down his warder, the trumpets sang peace;
And the judges declare, and competitors yield,
That the Knight of the Night-gear was first in the field.

The feast it was nigh, and the mass it was nigher,
When before the fair Princess low louted a squire,
And deliver'd a garment unseemly to view,
With sword-cut and spear-thrust, all hack'd and pierced through;
All rent and all tatter'd, all clotted with blood,
With the foam of the horses, with dust and with mud,
Not the point of that lady's small finger, I ween,
Could have rested on spot was unsullied and clean.

"This token my master, Sir Thomas a' Kent,
Restores to the Princess of fair Benevent;
He that climbs the tall tree has won right to the fruit,
He that leaps the wide gulf should prevail in his suit;
Through life's utmost peril the prize I have won,
And now must the faith of my mistress be shown:
For she who prompts knights on such danger to run,
Must avouch his true service in front of the sun."

While the tournament conſiſted of a general mêlée, ending in almoſt every caſe in ſome ſerious and fatal accident, the jouſt was a ſucceſſion of ſingle combats, which afforded to thoſe engaged in them an opportunity of diſplaying to greater advantage their ſkill and proweſs. The Knights of the Round Table, an inſtitution generally aſſociated with the name of Prince Arthur, was founded for giving opportunities to the youth of the nobility

THE TOURNAMENT.

for learning all the requiſite accompliſhments of a ſoldier, the moſt important of which was conſidered the art of jouſting. The weapons uſed in this diverſion were ſpears without heads of iron, and the feat which was ſought to be accompliſhed was ſtriking the opponent upon the front of his helmet, ſo as to beat him backwards from his horſe, or break the ſpear. There were occaſions when the liſts were formed, not for mere diverſion, or to win a lady's ſmile, but for a purpoſe ſo grave as that for which Bolingbroke and Norfolk met on that famous occaſion at Coventry, each "to prove himſelf a loyal gentleman." The famous duel was prevented, for when the fiery Bolingbroke and Norfolk

> Being mounted and both raised in their seats,
> Their neighing coursers daring of the spur,
> Their armed staves in charge, their beavers down,
> Their eyes of fire sparkling through sights of steel,
> And the loud trumpet blowing them together,
> Then, then, ...
> . . . . The king did throw his warder down,
> His own life hung upon the staff he threw;
> Then threw he down himself.

Froiſſart has recorded that memorable jouſting at St. Inglevere, where three French knights defended the liſts for thirty days againſt all comers; and, cauſing the challenge to be well made known in England, upwards of one hundred knights and eſquires went over to Calais, ſaying, like true knights and gallant men that they were, "Theſe French knights only hold the tournament that they may have our company; it is well done, and ſhows they

do not want courage; let us not diſappoint them." The French knights were Sir Boucicaut the younger, the Lord Reginald de Roye, and the Lord de Saimpi.

"Sir John Holland," ſays Froiſſart, "was the firſt who ſent his ſquire to touch the war-target of Sir Boucicaut, who inſtantly iſſued from his pavilion completely armed. Having mounted his horſe, and graſped his ſpear, which was ſtiff and well ſteeled, they took their diſtances. When the two knights had for a ſhort time eyed each other, they ſpurred their horſes, and met full gallop with ſuch force that Sir Boucicaut pierced the ſhield of the Earl of Huntingdon, and the point of his lance ſlipped along his arm, but without wounding him; the two knights, having paſſed, continued their gallop to the end of the liſt; this courſe was much praiſed. At the ſecond courſe they hit each other ſlightly, but no harm was done, and their horſes refuſed to complete the third. The Earl of Huntingdon, who wiſhed to continue the tilt, and was heated, returned to his place, expecting that Sir Boucicaut would call for his lance, but he did not, and ſhowed plainly he would not that day tilt more with the earl. Sir John Holland, ſeeing this, ſent his ſquire to touch the war-target of the Lord de Saimpi; this knight, who was waiting for the combat, ſallied out from his pavilion, and took his lance and ſhield. When the earl ſaw he was ready, he violently ſpurred his horſe, as did the Lord de Saimpi; they couched their lances, and pointed them at each other. At the onſet their horſes croſſed, notwithſtanding which, they met; but by this croſſing, which was blamed, the earl

was unhelmed. He returned to his people, who ſoon re-helmed him, and having reſumed their lances, they met full gallop, and hit each other with ſuch force in the middle of their ſhields, that they would have been unhorſed had they not kept tight ſeats by the preſſure of their legs againſt the horſes' ſides; they went to the proper places, where they refreſhed themſelves and took breath. Sir John Holland, who had a great deſire to ſhine at this tournament, had his helmet braced, and graſped his ſpear again; when the Lord de Saimpi, ſeeing him advance in a gallop did not decline meeting, but ſpurring his horſe on inſtantly, they gave blows on their helmets, that were luckily of well-tempered ſteel, which made ſparks of fire fly from them. At this courſe, the Lord de Saimpi loſt his helmet, but the two knights continued their career and returned to their places. This tilt was much praiſed, and the Engliſh and French ſaid that the Earl of Huntingdon, Sir Boucicaut, and the Lord de Saimpi had excellently well jouſted, without ſparing or doing themſelves any damage. The earl wiſhed to break another lance in honour of his lady, but it was refuſed him; he then quitted the liſts to make room for others, for he had run his ſix lances with ſuch ability and courage as gained him praiſe from all ſides."

When the Engliſh knights had each run their tilts, they marched in a body to the French knights and ſaid, "All the knights who have accompanied us having now tilted, we take our leave of you and return to Calais, on our way to England. We know well that whoever may wiſh to try their ſkill in arms will find you

here for thirty days according to your proclamation. On our return to England, we ſhall ſpeak loudly of your gallantry, and tell all thoſe who may inquire of theſe deeds of arms, to come and witneſs them in perſon." "Many thanks," replied the three knights; "they ſhall be made welcome and delivered by deeds of arms as you have been, and we deſire you will accept our beſt acknowledgments for the courteſy you have ſhown us." This was the ſtyle of international courteſies which exiſted in the chivalrous and romantic age of England.

Theſe noble ſports were of comparatively ſhort duration, for "The tournaments of the fifteenth century provided with ſo much care for the protection of the combatants that the chief object of the ſport, the development of bravery, was loſt; and the fire of emulation burned ſo low in the breaſts of the chief knights of the time, that they were content to have the number of blows that ſhould be ſtruck reduced to as mechanical a preciſion as any of the commoneſt arrangements of the tilt-yard. The ſhock of the war horſes, that had formed one of the leading perils of the encounter, was prevented by a double barrier of partitions dividing the hoſtile parties, and ſtretching acroſs the area of the liſts; while the thruſt of the lance and the ſword was alſo rendered harmleſs by the points being blunted."

In the time of Elizabeth the prohibition againſt taking part in jouſts being ſtill in force againſt the lower claſſes, tilting at the quintain, jouſting upon the ice, and boat tilting were introduced. When the maiden Queen viſited Sandwich in 1573,

ſhe was entertained with a tilting upon the water, "where certain wallounds that could well ſwym had prepared two boates, and in the middle of each boate was placed a borde, upon which borde there ſtood a man, and ſo they met together, with either of them a ſtaff and a ſhield of wood; and one of them did overthrowe another, at which the queene had good ſport."

Sir Henry Lee, who for many years held the proud office of Queen's Champion to Elizabeth, and was bound to preſent himſelf armed at the Tilt Yard (now Palace Yard), on the 27th of November of every year, feeling himſelf by the advance of age, unequal to the duties of braving knightly perils for his Queen, begged to be releaſed from his office, and from his retirement may be dated the final decline of theſe chivalrous diverſions. The reſignation was tendered on the 23rd of Elizabeth's reign, and in preſence of an aſſembly unuſually gay, numerous, and brilliant. It is thus deſcribed in Knight's "Old England":— "The jouſts being over, the Queen's aged knight, who has now done his devoirs in her ſervice for the laſt time, preſents himſelf at the foot of the ſtairs leading to the Queen's gallery. Juſt then, one of thoſe cunning ſurpriſes takes place, without which no fête of that age could have been conſidered complete. The earth, as it were, ſuddenly opening, there appeared an extraordinary and moſt beautiful little chapel, or temple, of white taffeta ſet upon pillars of porphyry, arched like unto a church, with many lamps burning in it, and the roof fretted with rich gothic work and gilding; an altar within, covered with cloth of gold, and lighted

by two large wax candles, in rich candleſticks; on this were laid certain princely preſents, Sir Harry Lee's parting memorials to the Queen. Strains of enchanting ſweetneſs iſſued from the temple as the aged knight drew near the throne, and Mr. Hales, her Majeſty's ſervant, a ſinger of admirable voice and ſkill, accompanied the inſtruments with theſe touching verſes, ſuppoſed to be addreſſed by Sir Henry to the Queen:—

My golden locks Time hath to silver turn'd
(Oh, Time! too swift, and swiftness never ceasing),
My youth 'gainst age, and age at youth hath spurn'd;
But spurn'd in vain—youth waneth by increasing—
Beauty, strength, and youth, flowers fading been;
Duty, faith, and love, are roots, and evergreen.

My helmet now shall make an hive for bees,
And lovers' songs shall turn to holy psalms,
A man-at-arms must now sit on his knees
And feed on prayers that are old age's alms.
And so from court to cottage I depart,
My saint is sure of mine unspotted heart.

And when I sadly sit in homely cell,
I'll teach my swains this carol for a song:
Blest be the hearts that think my sovereign well,
Cursed be the souls that think to do her wrong
Goddess, vouchsafe this aged man his right
To be your beadsman now, that was your knight."

FENCING.

FENCING was an art in which, as in archery, great proficiency was formerly attained by Engliſhmen. Ladies loved to witneſs a diſplay of the fencer's ſkill, and to beſtow rewards upon the ſucceſsful ſwordſman. The citizens of London practiſed the art extenſively. In the ſixteenth century Smithfield was in the zenith of its ſword play, and when its glory had paſſed away, old writers were wont to ſpeak with regret of the "ſword and buckler age in Smithfield." At the commencement of the ſeventeenth century, we read in the old play of "Two Angry Women," by Henry Porter, "Sword and buckler fight begin to grow out of uſe. I am ſorry for it; I ſhall never ſee good manhood again; if it be once gone, this poking fight of rapier and dagger will come up, then a tall man, that is a courageous man and a good ſword and buckler man, will be ſpitted like a cat or a rabbit." Previous to this period "the art of defence and uſe of weapons" was, according to Stowe, "taught by profeſſed

maſters" in the city of London; and a writer, who gives a deſcription of the colleges and ſchools in and about London in 1615, ſays, "In the city there be manie profeſſors of the ſcience of defence, and very ſkilful men in teaching the beſt and moſt offenſive and defenſive uſe of verie many weapons, as of the large ſword, back-ſword, rapier and dagger, ſingle rapier, the caſe of rapiers, the ſword and buckler or targate, the pike, the halberd, the long ſtaff and others. Henry VIII. made the profeſſors of this art a company or corporation by letters patent, wherein the art is intituled 'The noble ſcience of Defence.' The manner of the proceeding of our fencers in their ſchools is this: firſt, they which deſire to be taught at their admiſſion are called ſcholars, and as they profit, they take degrees and proceed to be provoſts of defence; and that muſt be wonne by public trial of their proficience and of their ſkill at certain weapons, which they call prizes, and in the preſence and view of many hundreds of people; and at their next and laſt prize well and ſufficiently performed, they do proceed to be maiſters of the ſcience of defence, or maiſters of fence as we commonly call them. The king ordained that none but ſuch as have thus orderly proceeded by public act and trial, and have the approbation of the principal maiſters of their company, may profeſs or teach this art of defence publicly in any part of England."

OLD ENGLISH PASTIMES—FENCING.

CANTERBURY PILGRIMS.

DECIDEDLY the moſt pictureſque features of "England's merrie days" are thoſe connected with the pilgrimages and journeyings of the people. A viſit to Canterbury or to Walſingham was in old times a matter of no ſmall difficulty; but our anceſtors entered upon the work careleſs of obſtacles, and thought leſs ſeriouſly of the fatigue of the road than do the excurſioniſts of the preſent day in taking their return-tickets for the famous ſhrine of à Beckett, or "eight hours at the ſea-ſide." Indeed the patron ſaint, to whoſe ſhrine theſe viſits of the pilgrims were made, was, when living, the laſt perſon in the world who would have wiſhed that the journey ſhould have been more unpleaſant than was abſolutely neceſſary. When the ſaint wore "hair ſhirts, and ate the drieſt of meats," it was after he had been diſgraced by the king; but times were not always ſo hard with the martyred Biſhop of Canterbury. "He fed," ſays an old tract, "with the fatteſt, was clad with the ſofteſt, and kept

company with the pleaſanteſt; his bridle was of ſilver, his ſaddle of velvet, his ſtirrups, ſpurs, and boſſes, double gilt; his expenſes far ſurpaſſing the expenſes of an earl. And the king made him his chancellor, in which office he paſſed the pomp and pride of Thomas Wolſey, Cardinal, as far as the one's ſhrine ſurpaſſeth the other's tomb in glory and riches; and after that he was a man of war, and captain of five or ſix thouſand men, in full harneſs as bright as St. George, and his ſpear in his hand, and encountered whoſoever came againſt him, and overthrew the jollyeſt rutter that was in all the hoſt of France. And out of the field, hot from blood-ſhedding, was he made Biſhop of Canterbury, and did put off his helm, and put on his mitre; put off his harneſs, and on with his robes; and laid down his ſpear, and took his croſs ere his hands were cold; and ſo came with a luſty courage of a man of war to fight another, while againſt his prince, for the Pope, when his prince's cauſe were with the law of God, and the pope's clean contrary."

One Thorpe, an old writer, looked, it is true, upon theſe pilgrimages with ſomething of a Puritan ſpirit; but was he not very properly tried for hereſy?—He ſays, "Theſe men and women, that go on pilgrimages to Canterbury, to Beverley, to Karlington, to Walſingham, and to any other ſuch places, are accurſed and made fooliſh, ſpending their money in waſte;" and he hints that the pilgrims went on their journeys more for the health of their bodies than of their ſouls. Perhaps the quaint old man who ſaid this at the beginning of the fifteenth century, was not very

wrong in his eſtimate of the real character of pilgrimages; and we ſhould be diſpoſed to believe that the pilgrims were "merry," rather than very pious in theſe affairs, eſpecially when he tells us,—"I know well that when divers men and women will go thus after their own wills, they will arrange to have with them both men and women that can well ſing wanton ſongs, and ſome other pilgrims will have with them bagpipes, ſo that every town they come through, what with the noiſe of their ſinging, and with the ſound of their piping, and with the jingling of their Canterbury-bells, and with barking of dogs after them, they make more noiſe than if the king came there with all his clarions and many other minſtrels. And if theſe men and women be a month in their pilgrimages, many of them ſhall be an half year after great janglers, tale-tellers, and liars." The good Archbiſhop Arundel provided a ſufficient anſwer to the ſtern man who abuſed the merry doings of the pilgrims—"When," ſaid the moſt reverend prelate of 1407, "one of them that goeth barefoot ſtriketh his toe upon a ſtone and maketh him to bleed, it is well done that he or his fellow begin then a ſong, or elſe take out of his boſom a bagpipe, for to drive away with ſuch mirth the hurt of his fellow. For with ſuch ſolace the travel and wearineſs of pilgrims is lightly and merrily brought forth."

There is not a more pleaſant picture of Engliſh life than that which Chaucer, the poet of character and manners, has drawn of the motley band of pilgrims, who aſſembled on that April morning at the Tabard Inn, of Southwark, to wend their

way to the ſhrine of the "bliſsful martyr" at Canterbury; and for the ſake of the pleaſant company which were then brought together, we will not inquire too cloſely into the motives by which they were actuated in undertaking the journey. Suffice it to ſay, it was "the cuſtom of the country,"—for has not England's greateſt poet written,

> Whanne that April with his shoures sote
> The droughte of March hath perced to the rote,
> And bathed every veine in swiche licuor
> Of which vertue engendred is the flour;
> Whan Zephirus eke with his sote brethe
> Enspired hath in every holt and hethe
> The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne,
> Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
> And smale foules maken melodie,
> That slepen alle nighte with open eye,
> So priketh hem nature in hir corages;
> Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
> And palmeres for to seken strange strondes,
> To serve halwes conthe in sondry londes;
> And specially, from every shires ende
> Of Englelond, to Canterbury they wende,
> The holy, blissful martyr for to seke
> That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

What a merry troup is that to which he then introduces us—thoſe "nine and twenty in a company" who arrived at the celebrated Tabard,

> In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all.

The hoſt receives his gueſts with befitting attention, and marſhals them to the great pilgrims' room. Firſt comes the

CANTERBURY PILGRIMS.

Knight, a noble ſpecimen of chivalry in all its gentleneſs and power, who has fought in no leſs than fifteen mortal battles, ſome of them againſt the heathens, but ſtill remains in his port and bearing "meek as a maid." Then comes the Prioreſs, ſmiling, ſimple, and coy, at the gallant attentions of the knight, and looking down on the tender motto of the gold brooch attached to her beads, *Amor vincit omnia;* ſhe wears a handſome black cloak, over a white tunic, for ſhe is of the Benedictine order. Her fair forehead is "a ſpan broad;" her mouth, "full ſmall, ſoft, and red;" noſe, "tretis" (long and well proportioned), and her eyes are grey. She would

> —— weep if that she saw a mouse
> Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.

A Nun and three prieſts follow in the train of the good and graceful woman, and then comes that royſtering Wife of Bath, laughing loud and heartily with the ſquire, who walks almoſt bluſhing by her ſide. She has a winning countenance, "fair and red of hue," which is well ſet off by the jaunty black hat, "broad as is a buckler or a targe." Already "huſbands at the church door has ſhe had five," but the "wife of Bath" would not take it amiſs if the ſquire with "lockés curl'd as they were laid in preſs," and ſo fond of "ſinging" and "floyting" all the day, would again lead her to the church porch. There is an attendant on the knight and ſquire; he carries "peacock arrows, bright and keen," "a foreſter ſoothly is he as I gueſs." Next

is the Parſon, poor, but "rich in holy thought and work," one who will rather give to his pariſhioners than "curſen" like ſome of his clerical brethren about the tithes. He is a man of learning and ability, but "no rain nor thunder," no ſickneſs nor misfortune, prevents him from viſiting "the fartheſt in his pariſh." Near him is the rich Monk, "a lord full fat, and in good point;" he prefers "pricking and hunting for the hare," to poring and "pottering" over books: "Now certainly he *is* a fair preláte." There, too, is the "wanton and merry Friar;" he has no idea of mortifying the fleſh, and he will not want the good things of this life while there are riotous Franklins, or worthy women to be abſolved, or ſo long as his harp and his ſongs make him a welcome gueſt at the taverns where his eyes do ſometimes twinkle "as do the ſtarres in a froſty night." The Sumpnour, of whoſe viſage children are uſual "ſore afeard," for he has "fire-red cherubinnes face," and "knobbes ſitting on his cheeks," is among the company, as well as his friend the "Pardoner," with lanky yellow hair falling about his ſhoulders. Behind them is the Miller, in his white coat and blue hood, his favourite bagpipes under his arm, and on his noſe that large wart and tuft of red briſtling hair, which certainly detracts a little from his perſonal appearance. The Merchant, the Reeve or Steward, the Sergeant-at-law, and the Doctor, "grounded in aſtronomie" and knowing the cauſe of every maladie, follow.

Next comes one whom we find drawn in "the Cabinet Picture of Engliſh Life," as the "handſome looking ſtately gentleman, with

the ſnow-white hand and ſanguine complexion, and the white ſilk gipcière or purſe hanging from his waiſt." It is the Franklin, ſometime knight of the ſhire, "Epicurus' owen ſon," who is evidently ſnuffing up with eager pleaſure certain delicate ſcents floating hitherwards from the kitchen, and offering up prayers that no unlucky accident may mar the delights of the table, that the ſauce may not want in ſharpneſs and poignancy, or his favourite diſh be done a turn too much. He is certainly an epicure; but he is alſo what epicures ſometimes are not, exceedingly hoſpitable; you ſhall never enter his houſe without finding great ſtore of baked meats, fiſh and fleſh, or without experiencing the truth of the popular remark, "It ſnowèd in his houſe of meat and drink."

The rear of this jovial party is brought up by the "Manciple," "wiſe in buying of victual;" the Shipman, whom hot ſummers has made "all brown;" the "Cook," unrivalled for his "blanc mange;" the Ploughman, brother of the worthy parſon; the Haberdaſher, the Carpenter, the Weaver, the Dyer and the maker of tapeſtry; and the poor "clerk of Oxenford," with threadbare garment and hollow face; and laſt of all followed to the ſupper room the poet Chaucer himſelf.

When that jovial hearty ſupper is concluded, the hoſt announces the merry fancy that has poſſeſſed him towards his gueſts. He tells them that they were to him "welcome right heartily," and "fain" would he do them "mirth,"—mirth, too, that ſhould coſt them nought,—as they journeyed on their way to the ſhrine of the "bliſsful martyr." In ſuch a pilgrimage he ſays:—

Comfórt ne mirth is none,
To riden by the way dumb as the stone;
And therefore would I maken you disport,
As I said erst, I do you some comfórt.

And he ſwears by his "father's ſoulé that is dead" that they ſhall be merry; and calls upon them, in the faſhion which has deſcended to our own day, to ſignify their pleaſure as to hearing his propoſition by holding up their hands. There are no diſſentients, and the jovial hoſt proceeds to explain his happy idea—

Lordlings, quod he, now hearkeneth for the best,
But take it not, I pray you, in disdain;
This is the point to speak it plat and plain,
That each of you to shorten with your way
In this *journey* shall tellen talès tway;
To Canterbury-ward, I mean it so,
And homeward he shall tellen other two;
Of adventures that whilom have befall,
And which of you that beareth him best of all;
That is to say, that telleth in this case,
Tales of best sentence and most soláce;
Shall have a supper at your aller cost,
Here in this place, sitting by this post
When that ye come again from Canterbury.
And for to maken you the morè merry
I will myselven gladly with you ride,
Right at mine owen cost, and be your guide;
And who that will my judgèment withsay,
Shall pay for all we spenden by the way.

The plan is agreed to by the pilgrims with "full glad heart," and they pray him—

CHRISTMAS REVELS.

— that he would be our governor,
And of our Talès judge and réporter,
And set a supper at a certain price;
And we would rulèd be at his device
In high and low.

With the dawn of day the pilgrims ſet forth, the hoſt having reminded them of their engagement of the previous evening, reſpecting implicit obedience to his rule; and when fairly on their road, the knight commenced that ſeries of tales in which Chaucer has ſo ſucceſsfully depicted the inner life, the habits, form of expreſſion, and thoughts of the Engliſh people during the ſtirring times of the Plantagenets.

At Walſingham, in the county of Norfolk, there was alſo a famous ſhrine of "Our Lady," at which many pilgrims paid their homage, and in connexion with it there is one of the choiceſt of England's old ballads:—

As ye came from the holy land
Of blessed Walsingham,
O met you not with my true love,
As by the way ye came?

"How should I know your true love
"That have met many a one,
"As I came from the holy land,
"That have both come and gone?"

My love is neither white nor browne,
But as the heavens faire;
There is none hath her form divine,
Either in earth or ayre.

"Such a one did I meet, good sir,
"With an angelicke face;
"Who like a nymphe, a queene appeard
"Both in her gait, her grace."

Yes: she hath cleane forsaken me,
And left me all alone;
Who some time loved me as her life,
And called me her owne.

"What is the cause she leaves thee thus,
"And a new way doth take;
"That some time loved thee as her life,
"And thee her joy did make?"

I that loved her all my youth,
Growe old now as you see:
Love liketh not the falling fruite,
Nor yet the withered tree.

For Love is like a carelesse childe,
Forgetting promise past;
He is blind, or deaf, whenere he list;
His faith is never fast.

His fond desire is fickle found,
And yieldes a trustlesse joye;
Wonne with a world of toil and care,
And lost ev'n with a toye.

Such is the love of womankinde,
Of Love's faire name abusde,
Beneath which many vaine desires
And follyes are excusde.

But true love is a durable fyre,
In the mind ever burninge,
Never sycke, never ould, never dead;
From itself never turninge.

THE OLD ABBEYS OF ENGLAND.

THE old Abbeys of England! how picturesque they stand in their ruins! proud and desolate memorials of a time when the new-born freedom of thought and mind indulged in the wildest freaks of its youthful excesses; and, aided by sovereign power, marked its progress towards reflecting manhood by the wanton destruction of some of the noblest edifices of our country. Time, the ruthless destroyer, still spares the old abbeys; and Nature kindly clothes them with the mantling ivy, to protect them in their green old age.

I do love these ancient ruins:
We never tread upon them, but we set
Our foot upon some rev'rend history;
And questionless, here in this open court,
Which now lies naked to the injuries

Of stormy weather, some lie interred,
Loved the church so well, and gave so largely to't,
They thought it should have canopied their bones
Till doomsday; but all things have their end;
Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men,
Must have like death that we have.

Many a one who has gazed upon an old abbey noble in its ruins, the rank graſs growing in its deſerted cloiſters, the chambers and refectories, once the buſy haunts of men, now ſilent and tenantleſs, will have felt ſomething of that feeling which Shakeſpeare has put into the mouth of Cromwell—

The infant yet unborn
Will curse the time the altars were pulled down.
I pray now, where is Hospitality?
Where now may poor distressed people go
For to relieve their need, or rest their bones
When weary travel doth oppress their limbs?
And where religious men should take them in,
They'll now be kept back by a mastiff dog.

A Norman abbey, while yet ſome of its glories clung around it, is thus deſcribed by Byron:—

It stood embosom'd in a happy valley,
Crown'd by high woodlands, where the druid oak
Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
His host, with broad arms 'gainst the thunder-stroke;
And from beneath his boughs were seen to sally
The dappled foresters—as day awoke,
The branching stag swept down with all his herd,
To quaff a brook which murmur'd like a bird.

THE ABBEY'S RUINED WALLS.

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
(While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart
In a grand arch, which once screen'd many an aisle;
These last had disappear'd—a loss to art:
The first yet frown'd superbly o'er the soil,
And kindled feelings in the roughest heart
Which mourn'd the power of time's or tempest's march,
In gazing on that venerable arch.

Within a niche nigh to its pinnacle,
Twelve saints had once stood sanctified in stone:
But these had fallen, not when the friars fell,
But in the war which struck Charles from the throne;
When each house was a fortalice—as tell
The annals of full many a line undone;
The gallant cavaliers who fought in vain,
For those who knew not to resign or reign.

But in a higher niche, alone, but crown'd,
The Virgin Mother of the God-born child,
With her Son in her blessed arms, look'd round,
Spared by some chance when all beside was spoil'd;
She made the earth below seem holy ground.
This may be superstition weak or wild,
But even the faintest relics of a shrine,
Of any worship, wake some thoughts divine.

Great changes have taken place in theſe edifices, even ſince Milton, in "Il Penſeroſo," was wont

To walk the studious cloisters pale,
And love the high embowered roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim, religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced choir below;

In ſervice high, and anthems clear,
As may with ſweetness through mine ear
Diſſolve me into ecſtaſies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.

Look upon this picture, and upon this,—the abbey in its pride, the building in its decay—

The hour has been, this mouldering pile
Was robed in ſymmetry ſublime;
Seen in ſtupendous ſtrength to ſmile,
And ſeemed to dare the power of Time.

Netley Abbey, in days long gone by, was among the moſt famous of our monaſtic eſtabliſhments. It neſtled amid the luxurious foliage and rich verdure on the banks of the broad water at Southampton; the towers of the abbey were the landmark of the happy mariner, and the peaſant liſtened with reverent joy to the veſper bell, and to the ſolemn chant of its inmates. All is changed. Ingoldſby reflects and moralizes over the ſcene,—

I ſaw thee, Netley, as the ſun
Across the weſtern wave
Was ſinking ſlow,
And a golden glow
To thy roofleſs towers he gave;
And the ivy ſheen,
With its mantle of green,
That wrapt thy walls around,
Shone lovelily bright
In that glorious light,
And I felt 't was holy ground.

Then I thought of the ancient time—
The days of thy monks of old;
When to Matin, and Vesper, and Compline chime,
The loud Hosanna roll'd,
And thy courts and "long drawn aisles" among,
Swell the full tide of sacred song.

And yet, fair Netley, as I gaze
Upon that grey and mouldering wall,
The glories of thy palmy days
Its very stones recall!
They "come like shadows, so depart"—
I see thee as thou wert—and art.

For many years after the firſt dawn of the Reformation, the people loved to congregate in the old abbeys, but the ſtately fabrics, neglected and deſecrated, gradually ſunk into ſuch graceful ruins as Tintern, and Kirkſtall, and Newſtead, and others. In the golden age of good Queen Beſs, Bolton Abbey was a favourite place of Sabbath reſort; poetic legends ſuch as that of "The White Doe," "ſoft and ſilent as a dream," and "beauteous as the ſilver moon," had taken root in the popular mind and inveſted the time-worn buildings with the charms of romance, and drawn to them the homage of a devout veneration. It is one of the days of Elizabeth's golden reign that Wordſworth deſcribes—

From Bolton's old monastic tower,
The bells ring loud with gladsome power;
The sun is bright, the fields are gay,
With people in their best array

Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf,
Along the banks of the crystal Wharf;
Through the vale retired and lowly,
Trooping to that summons holy.
And up among the moorlands, see
What sprinklings of blithe company!
Of lasses, and of shepherd grooms,
That down the steep hill force their way,
Like cattle through the budded brooms;
Path or no path, what care they?
And thus in joyous mood they hie
To Bolton's mouldering Priory.
* * * * *
For in the shatter'd fabric's heart
Remaineth one protected part;
A rural chapel, neatly drest,
In covert like a little nest;
And thither young and old repair,
This Sabbath-day, for praise and prayer.

Fast the churchyard fills;—anon,
Look again, they all are gone;
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak!
And scarcely have they disappeared
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard:—
With one consent the people rejoice,
Filling the church with a lofty voice!
They sing a service which they feel,
For 't is the sunrise now of zeal;
And faith and hope were in their prime
In great Eliza's golden time.

If there is one idea which more than another is associated with the past of these old abbeys, it is that they were the abodes of peaceful and contented minds, of men who knew

no care, and who were like the reſt of England's ſons—merry. From the earlieſt of our national ballads, to the lateſt jovial ſong, "I am a Friar of Orders Grey," unbroken teſtimony is borne to the merry life and ſubſtantial cheer of the inmates of Bolton and other abbeys. The eaſy life, and exceedingly "well-to-do" condition of the merry abbot of Canterbury, forms the ſubject of one humorous old ballad:—

I'll tell you a story—a story so merry,
Concerning the abbot of Canterbury;
How for his housekeeping, and high renown,
They rode post for him to fair London town.

An hundred men, the king did hear say,
The abbot kept in his house every day;
And fifty gold chains, without any doubt,
In velvet coats waited the abbot about.

How now! Father Abbot, I hear it of thee,
Thou keepest a far better house than me:
And for thy housekeeping, and high renown,
I fear thou work'st treason against my crown.

My liege, quoth the abbot, I would it were known,
I never spend nothing but what is my own;
And I trust your grace will do me no deere,
For spending my own true-gotten gear.

Yes, yes,—quoth he,—Abbot, thy fault is high,
And now for the same thou needest must die;
For except thou canst answer me questions three,
Thy head shall be smitten from thy body.

At first, quo' the king,—when I 'm in this stead,
With my crown of gold so fair on my head;
Among all my liegemen of noble birth,
Thou must tell me, to one penny, what I am worth.

Secondly, tell me, without any doubt,
How soon I may ride the world about;
And at the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly, what I do think.

O, these are hard questions for my shallow wit,
Nor I cannot answer your Grace as yet;
But if you will give me three weeks' space,
I 'll do my endeavour to answer your grace.

And our fathers loved to hear how the great abbot, ſorely diſtreſſed to anſwer theſe queries, was aſſiſted out of his difficulty by his poor ſhepherd, who, perſonating the abbot, appeared before the king, and having anſwered two of the queſtions, was told by his majeſty,

Now from the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do think.

And the merry anſwer was,

Yea that shall I do, and make your grace merry;
You think—*I'm the abbot of Canterbury;*
But I 'm his poor shepherd, as plain you may see,
That am come to beg pardon for him and for me.

And "the merry King John," as the ſtory goes, wanted to make the ſhepherd a "lord abbot;" but as the witty fellow could neither read nor write, the monarch rewarded the merry jeſt with

a penſion of "four nobles a week," and a pardon for the old abbot. The good things of this life were not only enjoyed by the jovial churchmen at Canterbury and elſewhere, but prelates and abbots loved to engage in manly ſports and paſtimes; and it is probable that Chaucer was not far wrong in his eſtimate of their qualifications, when he hints on more than one occaſion that they were more ſkilled in riding and hunting than in divinity.

The Archdeacon of Richmond, we are told, on his initiation to the priory of Bridlington, in Yorkſhire, in 1216, came attended by ninety-ſeven horſes, twenty-one dogs, and three hawks. In 1256, Walter de Suffield, Biſhop of Norwich, bequeathed by will his pack of hounds to the king; whilſt the abbot of Taviſtock, who had alſo a pack, was commanded by his biſhop in 1348 to break it up. A famous hunter, contemporary with Chaucer, was William de Clowne, abbot of Leiceſter, who died in 1377. His reputation for ſkill in the ſport of hare-hunting was ſo great, that the king himſelf, his ſon Edward, and certain noblemen, paid him an annual penſion that they might hunt with him.

Peace to their aſhes! Thoſe fine old abbeys, and rare old monks, we ſhall never look upon the like again!

THE OLD CASTLES OF ENGLAND.

GLORIOUS were the barons of England! they live in ſong and ſtory, and their heroic deeds are recorded on the brighteſt pages of our hiſtory! They were bold men, and from their caſtle homes they defied the tyranny which ſought to enſlave a brave people; or, iſſuing from their fortreſſes, they upheld in the battle-field the honour of their country; but when the ſtern demands of war, or the promptings of chivalrous ardour, did not ſummon them to the tented plain, their lordly caſtles were the ſcene of feſtive mirth, and profuſe hoſpitality, rude perhaps in diſplay, but genuine, high-ſouled, and hearty in their character. In foreign lands, as on England's ſoil, the barons of England won victory from powerful hands:—

Witness the field of Cressy, on that day
When volleying thunders roll'd unheard on high,
For in that memorable fray,
Broken, confused, and scatter'd in dismay,
France had ears only for the conqueror's cry,
"St. George, St. George for England! St. George and victory!"

Bear witness, Poictiers! where again the foe
From that same hand received his overthrow.
In vain essay'd Mont Joye, "St. Denis" rung
From many a boastful tongue
And many a hopeful heart in onset brave;
Their courage in the shock of battle quail'd,
His dread response when sable Edward gave,
And England and St. George again prevail'd.

Bear witness, Agincourt, where once again
The banner'd lilies on the ensanguined plain
Were trampled by the fierce pursuer's feet;
And France, doom'd ever to defeat
Against that foe, beheld her myriads fly
Before the withering cry,
"St. George, St. George for England! St. George and victory!"

Pleaſant indeed are the feelings with which, when travelling over the plains and valleys of our dear old England, we ſee amid the charming varieties of Engliſh landſcape ſome noble tower and battlements "boſom'd high in tufted trees." They are the pictureſque ruins of the old caſtles of the barons—there was a time when there were eleven hundred of theſe homes of feudal lords in England. Thoſe crumbling walls are the ſilent chroniclers of bygone years:

Would they had tongues the deeds of yore to tell,
What pageants ſported in their mid-day ſun;
What knight who in the liſts could all excel,
The envied laurel wreath of victory won.

How changed is the ſcene ſince lords and ladies gay lived and loved, and wooed and ſmiled, within thoſe embattled walls—

All ruined and wild is their roofleſs abode,
And lonely the dark ravens' ſheltering tree;
And travelled by few is the graſs-covered road,
Where the hunter of deer, and the warrior trode,
To his hills that encircle the ſea.

From Grongar hill Dyer ſaw this charm of Engliſh ſcenery—

Gaudy as the opening dawn
Lies a long and level lawn,
On which a dark hill, ſteep and high,
Holds and charms the wandering eye!
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,
His ſides are clothed with waving wood;
And ancient towers crown his brow,
That caſt an ample look below;
Whoſe rugged walls the ivy creeps,
And with her arms from falling keeps.
'Tis now the raven's bleak abode;
'Tis now the apartment of the toad;
And there the fox ſecurely feeds,
And there the poiſonous adder breeds,
Conceal'd in ruin, moſs, and weeds.
While ever and anon there falls
Huge heaps of hoary mouldered walls.

Let us endeavour, with the aid of Sir Walter Scott, to realize the picture of one of our old caſtles in the height of its lordly

proſperity. We ſelect one of the moſt famous of the border caſtles of our country.

Day set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
  And Cheviot's mountains lone :
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates, where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
  In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
  Seem'd forms of giant height :
Their armour as it caught the rays
Flash'd back again the western blaze,
  In lines of dazzling light.

St. George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray,
  Less bright, and less, was flung ;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the Donjon Tower,
  So heavily it hung.
The scouts had parted on their search,
  The castle gates were barr'd ;
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
  The warder kept his guard ;
Low humming, as he paced along,
Some ancient Border gathering song.

A distant trampling sound he hears ;
He looks abroad, and soon appears,
O'er Horncliff-hill, a plump of spears
  Beneath a pennon gay ;

A horseman darting from the crowd,
Like lightning from a summer cloud,
Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
  Before the dark array.
Beneath the sable palisade
That loosed the Castle barricade,
  His bugle horn he blew;
The warder hasted from the wall,
And warn'd the captain in the hall,
  For well the blast he knew;
And joyfully that knight did call,
To sewer, squire, and seneschal:

"Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
  Bring pasties of the doe,
And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds ready be,
And every minstrel sound his glee,
  And all our trumpets blow;
And from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot;
  Lord Marmion waits below!"
Then to the Castle's lower ward
  Sped forty yeomen tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,
Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparr'd,
  And let the drawbridge fall.

And there we leave the bold Marmion to the welcome provided for him.

Charles Knight tells of other duties and occupations beſides thoſe of war, and paſtime, and feaſting, in which the lordly tenants

NORHAM CASTLE.

of the caſtle fortreſſes of our country were wont to paſs their time. The great caſtle-builder provided his walls and his courts, his keep and his dungeons; but a chapel was no leſs indiſpenſable alike to his ſtation and his actual wants. Beleaguered or free, he muſt be able at all times to hear the daily maſs, or, more grateful ſtill to lordly ears, the pious oriſon offered up for his own and his family's welfare; he muſt be able to fly to the chapel for ſuccour when the "thick-coming fancies" of ſuperſtition preſs upon his imagination, and appal him by their myſterious influence, or when defeat or danger threatens; there too in the hour of triumph muſt he be found, his own voice mingling with the chant of prieſt; at births, baptiſms, marriages, and deaths, the ſacred doors muſt be ever at hand; the child faſt growing up to man's eſtate, who has ſpent his entire life within the caſtle, looks forward to the chapel as the ſcene that ſhall uſher him into a world of glory,—already he feels the touch of the golden ſpurs, the ſway of the lofty plumes, the thrill of the fair hands that gird on his maiden ſword; already, with alternating hopes and fears, he anticipates his ſolitary midnight vigil within the chapel walls.

And truly ſuch a night in ſuch a place as this, to which we have deſcended below the keep of Newcaſtle, was calculated to try the tone of the firmeſt nerves; for though beautiful—exceedingly beautiful it is in all that reſpects the architectural ſtyle to which it belongs, and of which it is a rare example—there are here no lofty pointed windows, with their ſtoried panes, to admit the full broad beam of radiant ſplendour, or to give

the idea of airineſs or elegance to the ſtructure. All is maſſive, great, and impreſſively ſolemn.

The diſtinctive features of the nineteenth century and the days of the feudal lords of England have ſeldom been more forcibly ſhown than by FitzGreene Halleck, an American, who a few years ſince viſited Alnwick Caſtle, and penned the following:—

Home of the Percy's high-born race,
Home of their beautiful and brave,
Alike their birth and burial-place,
Their cradle and their grave!
Still sternly o'er the castle gate
Their house's Lion stands in state,
As in his proud departed hours;
And warriors frown in stone on high,
And feudal banners "flout the sky"
Above his princely towers.

A gentle hill its side inclines,
Lovely in England's fadeless green,
To meet the quiet stream which winds
Through this romantic scene,
As silently and sweetly still,
As when at evening on that hill,
While summer's wind blew soft and low,
Seated by gallant Hotspur's side,
His Katherine was a happy bride,
A thousand years ago.

One solitary turret gray
Still tells in melancholy glory
The legend of the Cheviot day,
The Percy's proudest Border story.

That day its roof was triumph's arch;
Then rang from aisle to pictured dome
The light step of the soldier's march,
The music of the trump and drum;
And babe, and sire, the old, the young,
And the monk's hymn and minstrel's song,
And woman's pure kiss, sweet and long,
Welcomed her warrior home.

* * * * *

Wild roses by the abbey towers
Are gay in their young bud and bloom;
They were born of a race of funeral flowers
That garlanded, in long-gone hours,
A Templar's knightly tomb.
He died, the sword in his mailed hand,
On the holiest spot of the Blessed Land;
Where the Cross was damp'd with his dying breath,
When blood ran free as festal wine,
And the sainted air of Palestine
Was thick with the darts of death.

Wise with the lore of centuries,
What tales, if there be "tongues in trees,"
Those giant oaks could tell,
Of beings born and buried here;
Tales of the peasant and the peer,
Tales of the bridal and the bier,
The welcome and farewell,
Since on their boughs the startled bird
First in her twilight slumbers heard
The Norman's curfew-bell.

* * * * *

BARONIAL FEASTS.

EARLY in England's hiſtory, feudal lords, in their caſtle homes, were right merry at their feſtive boards. Mailed barons, grim of aſpect, who dared to ſhow their power in the preſence of crowned deſpots, and to draw their ſwords in defence of Engliſh liberties, or againſt threatened invaſion of their rights and privileges, ofttimes laid aſide their armour, and diſpenſed a rude but genuine hoſpitality to all comers. Rough and ready were thoſe Engliſh barons to meet a worthy foeman on the field, or receive a truſty knight at their tables; ready were they in their moated and embattled homes to bid the warder ſound defiance from their walls, or flouriſh a glad welcome to the traveller to his well-ſpread board. When wars in foreign climes, as at Creſſy or Agincourt; on their native ſoil, as at Towton and Eveſham; or, later, on the hard-fought fields of Boſworth or Naſeby, claimed no military ſervice at their hands,—

Then all was jollity,
Feasting and mirth, light wantonness and laughter,
Piping and playing, minstrelsies and smoking,
Till life fled from us like an idle dream.

In fancy we can hear ſome baron who has led back his retainers, worn and waſted by a long campaign, entering the maſſive portals of his caſtle, telling to liſtening knights and ladies what victories he had won; what hardſhips he and his truſty band had endured, and exclaiming—

But now we will have bellowing of beeves,
Broaching of barrels, brandishing of spigots;
Blood shall flow freely, but it shall be gore
Of herds, flocks, and venison, poultry,
Join'd to the brave heart's blood of John-a-barleycorn.

And then would follow ſuch a ſcene as that which Scott has ſo graphically deſcribed in "The Lay of the Laſt Minſtrel:"—

'T was now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire with heedful haste
Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blades, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share.
O'er capon, heronshrew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train;
And o'er the boar-head garnish'd brave,
And cygnet from St. Mary's wave;
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison

Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from its lofty balcony,
Rang trumpet, ſhalm, and pſaltery:
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,
Loudly they ſpoke and loudly laugh'd;
Whiſper'd young knights in tones more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies ſmiled.
The hooded hawks, high perch'd on beam,
The clamour join'd with whiſtling ſcream,
And flapp'd their wings, and ſhook their bells,
In concert with the ſtag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flaſks of ruddy wine
From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine.
Their tasks the buſy ſervers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

Or we may picture to ourſelves ſuch a feaſt as that which Warton has drawn, when the Plantagenet monarch ſhared the feſtivities of the baron's banquet:—

Stately the feaſt, and high the cheer:
Girt with many an armed peer,
And canopied with golden pall,
Amid Cilgarran's caſtle hall,
Sublime in formidable ſtate
And warlike ſplendour Henry ſate;
Prepared to ſtain the briny flood
Of Shannon's lakes with rebel blood.

Illumining the vaulted roof,
A thouſand torches flamed aloof:
From maſſy cups, with golden gleam,
Sparkled the red metheglin's ſtream:
To grace the gorgeous feſtival,
Along the lofty-window'd hall

DINNER IN A BARONIAL HALL.

The storied tapestry was hung:
With minstrelsy the raſters rung
Of harps, that with reflected light
From the proud gallery glitter'd bright;
While gifted bards, a rival throng
(From distant Mona, nurse of song;
From Teivi, fringed with umbrage brown;
From Elvy's vale and Cader's crown;
From many a shaggy precipice
That shades Ierne's hoarse abyss,
And many a sunless solitude
Of Radnor's inmost mountains rude),
To crown the banquet's solemn close,
Themes of British glory chose.

The old ballad, called "Time's Alterations," after deploring the changes which modern cuſtoms and times had introduced, and referring to days that had paſt, ſays—

The nobles of our land,
Were much delighted then
To have at their command
A crew of lusty men,
Which by their coats were known,
Of tawny, red, or blue,
With crests on their sleeves shown,
When this old cap was new.

And Stowe, in his "Survey of London," has preſerved many facts which ſerve to corroborate the truth of the old ballad. Among other nobles whoſe names are thus preſerved, are "Robert Nevill, Earl of Warwick, with ſix hundred men, all in red jackets embroidered with ragged ſtaves before and behind, and was lodged in Warwicke lane, in whoſe houſe there was oftentimes ſix oxen

eaten at a breakfaſt, and every tavern was full of his meat; for he that had any acquaintance in that houſe might have there ſo much of ſodden and roaſt meat as he could prick and carry upon a long dagger. More, I read that Hugh Spencer the elder was baniſhed the realm, at which time it was found by inquiſition that the ſaid Spencer had in ſundry ſhires fifty-one manors, he had twenty-eight thouſand ſheep, one thouſand oxen and ſteers, one thouſand two hundred kine with their calves; forty mares with their colts, one hundred and ſixty drawing-horſes, two thouſand hogs, three hundred bullocks, forty tuns of wine, ſix hundred bacons, eighty carcaſſes of Martilmaſſe beef, ſix hundred muttons in larder, ten tuns of cider, his armour, plate, and jewels, and ready money, better than £10,000, thirty-ſix ſacks of wool, and a library of books."

The houſekeeping of Edward, late Earl of Derby, is not to be forgotten, who had two hundred and twenty men in check-roll, his feeding aged perſons twice every day, ſixty and odd, beſides "all comers thrice a week, appointed for his dealing days, and every Good Friday two thouſand ſeven hundred with meat, drink, and money."

Richard Redman, Biſhop of Ely (1500, 17th of Henry VII.), "beſides his great family houſekeeping, alms diſh, and relief to the poor, whereſoever he was lodged, in his travelling, when at his coming or going to or from any town, the bells being rung, all the poor would come together, to whom he gave every one ſixpence at the leaſt."

Nicholas Weſt, Biſhop of Ely (1532), "kept continually in his houſe an hundred ſervants, giving to the one half of them 53*s.* 4*d.* the piece, yearly; to the other half, each 40*s.* the piece; to every one for his winter gown, four yards of broadcloth, and for his ſummer coat three yards and a half. He daily gave at his gates, beſides bread and drink, warm meat to two hundred poor people."

"I have ſeen an account," writes the old chronicler, "made by H. Leiceſter, cofferer to Thomas, Earl of Lancaſter, for one whole year's expenſes in the Earl's houſe, amounting to 7,957*l.* 13*s.* 4½*d.*" Amid all this rude magnificence the claims of charity were not forgotten, either by the laity or the clergy; and Bede tells that it was the cuſtom among the prelates, "having peradventure but wooden churches," to have "notwithſtanding on their board at their meals an alms diſh, into the which was carved ſome good portion of meat and of every other diſh brought to their table; all of which was given to the poor, beſides the fragments left; inſomuch as in a hard time a poor prelate, wanting victuals, hath cauſed his alms diſh, being ſilver, to be divided among the poor, wherewith to ſhift as they could till God ſhould ſend them better ſtore."

In the famous ballad of the "Blind Beggar of Bednall Green," we learn that—

> All kinds of dainties and delicates sweete
> Were brought for the banquet as it was most meete;
> Partridge and plover, and venison most free,
> Against the brave wedding of pretty Bessie.

In the time of Fuller, this profuſe hoſpitality of the Barons had begun to diſappear; but luſty yeomen ſtill handed down from father to ſon reverence for the good things of this life, and due reſpect to the demands of hoſpitality.

"Some hold," ſays Fuller, "that when Hoſpitality died in England, ſhe gave her laſt groan among the yeomen of Kent. And ſtill at our yeomen's tables, you ſhall have as many joints as diſhes. No meat diſguiſed with ſtrange ſauces, no ſtraggling joynt of a ſheep in the midſt of a paſture of graſſe, beſet with ſalads on every ſide; but more ſolid, ſubſtantial food; no ſervitors (more nimble with their hands, than the gueſts with their teeth) take away meat before ſtomachs are taken away. Here you have that which in itſelf is good made better by the ſtore of it, and beſt by the welcome to it."

WANDERING MINSTRELS.

LONG ago the lays of the minſtrels were the delight of our anceſtors. It was by the ſtrains of the old bards, that infant genius was nurtured; the ſtern hearts of ſteel-clad knights, and heroic barons, grew ſoft beneath the harper's power: and it was by the minſtrel that the memory of illuſtrious actions and noble deeds was kept alive in the hearts of the people, and handed down to later ages. We ſee through the haze of years the minſtrels arouſing the paſſions and awakening the ſlumbering energies of the people againſt the Norman and Saxon invader; anon, their harps reſound in the regal halls, or cheer the rude banquets where luſty barons and warlike knights regale themſelves; then in ſofter accents, they recount to liſtening dames the ſtories of devoted knights, of gallant deeds of chivalry, and of ladies' ſmiles that rewarded the valiant and the brave. In the palace, in the caſtle, in the rude manſion, amid the mirthful gatherings of the village wakes, among the

merry men of Sherwood, and in the caves of outlaws, the minſtrel always found a cordial welcome, and of him it has been truly ſaid—

> Thine was the voice that cheer'd the brave and free,
> They had their hills, their chainless hands, and—thee.

Pope thus apoſtrophizes the memory of the old bards:—

> Hail, bards triumphant! born in happier days,
> Immortal heirs of universal praise;
> Whose honours will increase if ages grow,
> As streams roll down enlarging as they flow;
> Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,
> And worlds applaud that must not yet be found.

In England's merry days, the charms of muſic were widely felt; and in the days of Elizabeth, we had "muſicians equal to any in Europe for their ſkill, either in compoſing or ſetting of tunes, or ſinging and playing on any kind of inſtrument." Still earlier, in the time of the Venerable Bede, it was the cuſtom "to hand the harp from one perſon to another in the convivial meetings, and every one who partook of the feſtivity played upon it in his turn, ſinging a ſong to the muſic, for merriment ſake." Even in this age of monſter concerts, Hullah-ism, Tonic-sol-fa Aſſociations, and muſic for the million, our ſocial meetings are not ſo merry as were thoſe of the old time, when it was

> Merry in the hall when beards wagged all.

The love of muſic, which the minſtrels created and ſuſtained, was wide-ſpread through the country. Richard Edwards, in a fine old ſong to the lute, ſang—

Where gripinge grefes the harte would wounde
And doleful dumps the mynde oppresse,
There musicke with her silver sound,
With spede is wont to send redresse:
For trobled minds in every sore,
Sweet musicke hath a silver store.

In joy yt maks our mirthe abounde,
In woe yt cheres our hevy sprites;
Destracted heads relief hath founde
By musickes pleasant swete delightes:
Our senses,—what shall I say more?—
Are subject unto musickes lore.

The charms and influence of muſic were well known to Shakeſpeare:—

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me the excess of it; that surfeiting
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again;—it had a dying fall;
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.

And the people who thus loved muſic were grateful, hoſpitable and kind to the minſtrel who brought its influence within their reach. Wordſworth, in his "Excurſion," ſays of the palmieſt time of the minſtrels:—

In days of yore how fortunately fared
The minstrel! wandering on from hall to hall,
Baronial court or royal; cheer'd with gifts
Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise;
Now meeting on his road an armèd knight,

Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
Of a clear brook; beneath an abbey's roof
One evening sumptuously lodged; the next
Humbly in a religious hospital;
Or with some merry outlaws of the wood;
Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell.
Him, sleeping or awake, the robber spared;
He walk'd—protected from the sword of war,
By virtue of that sacred instrument,
His harp, suspended at the traveller's side:
His dear companion wheresoe'er he went,
Opening from land to land an easy way
By melody, and by the charm of verse.

Some trace of this reſpect and kindneſs ſtill lingers in the treatment of the humbler deſcendants of the minſtrels. In a very pretty modern ſong of Linley's, the "ballad-ſinger" ſings:—

Waking at early day,
Early I take my way,
Trilling some ancient lay
As I stroll along.
Youthful hearts I cheer,
Age delights to hear,
Gay and grave draw near,
While I sing my song.

Humble though be my fare,
Health is a boon I share,
Little I dream of care,
As thro' life I go.
All some kindness show to me
Where'er I chance to roam;
Tho' a wandering life I lead,
I always find a home.

The moſt famous ſtory of the Engliſh minſtrels is that of Blondel, who was attached to the court of Richard I., and who ſucceeded in finding his royal maſter by means which an old writer has recorded in the following narrative:—

"The Engliſhmen were more than a whole yeare without hearing any tydings of their King, or in what place he was kept priſoner. He had trained up in his Court a Rimer or Minſtrill called Blondell de Neſle; who being ſo long without the ſight of his Lord, his life ſeemed weariſome to him, and he became confounded with melancholly. Knowne it was that he came backe from the Holy Lande; but none could tell in what country he had arrived. Whereupon this Blondell, reſolving to make ſearch for him in many countries, but he would hear ſome newes of him; after expenſe of divers dayes in travaile, he came to a town (by good hap) near to the caſtell where his maiſter King Richard was kept. Of his hoſt he demanded to whom the caſtell appertained, and the hoſt told him that it belonged to the Duke of Auſtria. Then he enquired whether there were any priſoners therein detained or no; for alwayes he made ſuch ſecret queſtioning whereſoever he came. And the hoſte gave anſwer there was only one priſoner, but he knew not what he was, and yet he had been detained there more then the ſpace of a yeare. When Blondell heard this he wrought ſuch menes that he became acquainted with them of the caſtell, as Minſtrels doe eaſily win acquaintance any where; but ſee the King he could not, neither underſtande that it was he. One day he ſat directly before a window of the caſtell where King Richard was

kept priſoner, and began to ſing a ſong in French what King Richard and Blondell had ſometime compoſed together. When King Richard heard the ſong he knew it was Blondell that ſung it; and when Blondell pauſed at halfe the ſong, the king 'began the other halfe and completed it.' Thus Blondell won knowledge of the King, and returning home into England, made the Barons of the Countrie acquainted where the King was."

An ancient writer has preſerved the original Provençal words of this famous ſong; and a very graceful rendering of them has been made by Dr. Burney and Mr. Ellis. We give the verſion of Dr. Burney:—

BLONDEL.

Your beauty, lady fair,
None views without delight;
But ſtill ſo cold an air,
No paſſion can excite;
Yet this I patient ſee,
While all are ſhunn'd like me.

RICHARD.

No nymph my heart can wound,
If favour ſhe divide;
And ſmiles on all around,
Unwilling to decide;
I'd rather hatred bear,
Than love with others ſhare.

One of our national ballads tells how King Eſtmere won his bride in the diſguiſe of a harper. The good king had a younger brother, and,—

As they were drinking ale and wine
Within King Estmere's hall,

the young Adler inquired,

> When will ye marry a wyfe, brothèr,
> A wyfe to glad us all?

Now Eſtmere was a monarch who was deſirous of maintaining his royal dignity, and appeared to be upon very good terms with himſelf; for his majeſty "anſwered him haſtilee:"

> I know not that ladye in any land
> That 's able to marrye with mee.

He was reminded that the great king Adland had a "fayre" daughter that would not diſcredit the monarch's dignity, and finally Eſtmere and his younger brother departed on the delicate miſſion of ſoliciting the hand of the fair princeſs. They wiſely reſolved to go in perſon, becauſe

> Many throughe fals messengers are deceived;

and they "feared leſt ſoe ſhold" they. Arrived at the palace, they found the great king Adland leaning againſt the gate. They informed him of their miſſion, and were told that the King of Spain had already made an offer for the princeſs, who had

> Nicked him of naye,
> And I doubt sheele do you the same.

Eſtmere did not give way to deſpondency, but ſaid that a foul paynim, who believed in Mahomet, a "heathen hound" in ſhort, ſhould not marry the fayre lady. The Benedict monarch ſaw the

princeſs, who with that frankneſs and candour characteriſtic of the ladies in the olden time informed him at once—

> You be welcome, kyng Estmere,
> Right welcome unto me.

And ſhe told him that if he really loved her ſo well and "hartilee" as he had profeſſed, there was no neceſſity for any long delay in the matter that he had "comen about." The good king plighted his troth, and took leave of the lady to return to his own country to make arrangements for the coming marriage. He had not ridden a mile out of the town before the King of Spain entered with many ſoldiers to marry and carry away the princeſs. Eſtmere and his brother were overtaken by one of the royal pages, and duly informed of this unpleaſant ſtate of affairs. The brothers took counſel as to the beſt courſe to be adopted, when the younger one propoſed to return to the town in diſguiſe—

> And you shall be a harper, brother,
> Out of the north countrye;
> And I'll be your boy so faine of fighte,
> And beare your harpe by your knee;
>
> And you shall be the best harpèr
> That ever tooke harpe in hand;
> And I will be the best singèr
> That ever sung in this lande.

The plan was adopted, the brothers returned, and the harper played ſo well, that the King of Spain begged him to deſiſt; for if he continued, he would entice his bride away from him. But, Eſtmere

He played agayne both loud and shrille,
And Adler he did syng;
"O Ladye! this is thy own true love,
"Noe harper, but a kyng.

"O ladye! this is thy own true love,
"As playnlye thou mayest see;
"And Ile rid thee of that foule paynim
"Who partes thy love and thee."

The ladye looked, the ladye blushte,
And blushte and lookt agayne;
While Adler he hath drawn his brande,
And hath the Sowdan slayne.

This very naturally produced a "ſcene;" but the young men were ſkilful at their ſword, as well as at the harp, and after clearing the hall of the "kempery men,"—the King of Spain's ſoldiers,—

King Estmere took that fayre ladyè,
And marryed her to his wiffe,
And brought her home to merry England,
With her to leade his life.

Gray gives us a majeſtic picture of an old bard at an intereſting period of Britiſh hiſtory. Edward's conquering army were marching through a deep valley, when it was ſuddenly arreſted in its courſe by the appearance of a venerable figure ſeated on the ſummit of an inacceſſible rock, who with a voice more than human reproached the king with the miſery and deſolation which he had brought upon his country; foretold the misfortunes of the Norman race, and with prophetic ſpirit declared that all his cruelty ſhould never

extinguiſh the noble ardour of poetic genius, and that men ſhould never be wanting to celebrate true virtue and valour in immortal ſtrains, to expoſe vice and infamous pleaſure, and boldly cenſure tyranny and oppreſſion. His ſong ended, the venerable bard precipitated himſelf from the mountain, and was loſt in the river that rolled at its feet.

On a rock whose haughty brow
  Frowns o'er cold Conway's foaming flood;
Robed in the sable garb of woe,
  With haggard eyes the poet stood;
(Loose his beard and hoary hair
Streamed like a meteor to the troubled air;)
And with a master's hand and prophet's fire
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless king!
  Confusion on thy banners wait;
Tho' fanned by conquest's crimson wing,
  They mock the air with idle state.
Helm nor hauberk's twisted mail,
Nor e'en thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail
  To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
  From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears."
Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride
  Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowden's shaggy side,
  He wound with toilsome march his long array.

The memory of the ancient minſtrels is always aſſociated with ideas of liberty and freedom—"The children of ſong may not languiſh in chains;" and this idea is charmingly preſerved by Moore in his ſong of "The Minſtrel Boy," where he tells how—

The minstrel fell!—but the foeman's chain
Could not bring his proud soul under;
The harp he loved ne'er spoke again,
For he tore its chords asunder;
And said, "No chains shall sully thee,
Thou soul of mirth and bravery!
Thy songs were made for the pure and free,
They never shall sound in slavery."

There ſtill live in England many of the ſongs of our fathers —many of thoſe which, Mrs. Hemans tells, were—

The songs their souls rejoiced to hear,
When harps were in their hall;
And each proud note made lance and spear
Thrill on the bannered wall.
The songs that through our valleys green,
Sent on from age to age,
Like his own river's voice, have been
The peasant's heritage.

So let it be! a light they shed
O'er each old fount and grove;
A memory of the gentle dead;
A lingering spell of love.
Murmuring the names of mighty men,
They bid our streams roll on;
And link high thoughts to every glen,
Where valiant deeds were done.

Teach them your children round the hearth,
When evening fires burn clear;
And in the fields of harvest mirth,
And on the hills of deer.

So shall each unforgotten word,
When far those loved ones roam,
Call back the hearts which once it stirred,
To childhood's holy home.

A graphic picture is given of the laſt of the bards in Scott's "Lay of the Laſt Minſtrel:"—

The way was long, the wind was cold,
The minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek and tresses gray
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy;
The last of all the bards was he,
Who sang of Border chivalry;
For, well-a-day! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear.

"THE AGED MINSTREL AUDIENCE GAINED."

As the old man toiled along by " Newark's ſtately towers,"—

> The Duchess mark'd his weary pace,
> His timid mien and reverend face,
> And bade her page the menials tell,
> That they should tend the old man well.

The wants of the minſtrel were readily ſupplied, and the kind attention which he received having pleaſed and gratified the poor old man, he would repay the favours which he had received by once more wakening the muſic of his harp; for—

> Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
> He thought even yet the sooth to speak;
> That, if she loved the harp to hear,
> He could make music to her ear.
> The humble boon was soon obtain'd,
> The aged Minstrel audience gain'd;
> But, when he reach'd the room of state,
> Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
> Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:
> For, when to tune his harp he tried,
> His trembling hand had lost the ease
> Which marks security to please:
> And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
> Came wildering o'er his aged brain.
> He tried to tune his harp in vain!
> The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
> And gave him heart, and gave him time,
> Till every string's according glee
> Was blended into harmony.
> And then, he said, he would full fain
> He could recall an ancient strain
> He never thought to sing again.

It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had play'd it to King Charles the good,
When he kept court in Holyrood;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face and smiled;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his heart responsive rung,
'Twas thus the Latest Minstrel sung.

What was the burden of that "Lay of the Laſt Minſtrel" we need not tell; for who has not lingered over "that bright conſummate flower, in which all the deareſt of Scott's youthful fancies found expanſion for their ſtrength, tenderneſs, and beauty."

CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

CHEERFULNESS was the characteriſtic of our fathers, not leſs in the genial ſpring, the glowing ſummer, and the grateful autumn, than in the bleak ſeaſon, when the ſmiling plains and valleys

Put on their snowy robe of purest white.

When winter ſpread its lateſt gloom, and "reigned tremendous o'er the conquered year," its rigours were ſoftened by the kindly feeling and generous hoſpitality which prevailed in the caſtles, the abbeys, and the manſions of old England. The hoar deſpot was deſpoiled of half his terrors, though he came in form more grim and terrible than even Chatterton has painted him,—

Pale, rugged Winter, bending o'er his tread,
His grizzled hair bedropped with icy dew;
His eyes a dusky light, congealed and dead,
His robe a tinge of light ethereal hue.

His train a motley, sanguine, sable cloud,
He limps along the russet dreary moor;
While rising whirlwinds, blasting, keen, and loud,
Roll the white surges to the sounding shore.

In December's froſtieſt days—aye, even when ſo "bitter chill" that with Keats we might ſay, "The owl for all his feathers was a cold"—ſtill the "deſolate domain" of Winter was a limited one, for there were thoſe who would ſing that famous ſong of Shakeſpere,—

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail;
When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-whoo;
Tu-whit, to-whoo, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-whoo;
Tu-whit, to-whoo, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

Thoſe were the days when the Yule-log blazed and crackled in the gaping chimney, and its flood of light baniſhed gloom from the lofty arched halls of our fathers. Shouts of boiſterous

mirth, with beating of drums and blowing of trumpets, rung through the clear, criſp, froſty air, as the crowd of retainers and ſervants, with flare of torches and rude mechanical contrivances, brought the log from the adjoining foreſt. Among many Chriſtmas ceremonies which Herrick, who loved to ſing of May-poles, hock-carts, and waſſail-wakes, has deſcribed, may be found this joyous invitation to be merry:—

Come, bring with a noise,
My merry merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame, she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your hearts' desiring.
With the last year's brand,
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending.

On your psalteries play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a tending.
Drink now the strong beer,
Cut the white loaf here;
The while the meat is a shredding
For the rare mince-pie,
And the plums stand by
To fill the paste that's a kneading.

Another very agreeable part of the Chriſtmas feſtivities of olden time is told by Stevenſon in his "Twelve Months." Of this feſtive ſeaſon he ſays:—"Now capons and hens, beſides turkeys, geeſe, ducks, with beef and mutton, muſt all die; for

in twelve days multitude of people will not be fed with a little. Now plums and ſpice, ſugar and honey, ſquare it among pies and broth. Now a journeyman cares not a ruſh for his maſter, though he begs his plum-porridge all the twelve days. Now or never muſt the muſic be in time, for the youth muſt dance and ſing to get them in a heat, while the aged ſit by the fire. The country-maid leaves half her market, and muſt be ſent again if ſhe forgets a pack of cards on Chriſtmas-eve. Great is the contention of holly and ivy, whether maſter or dame wears the breeches; and if the cook do not lack wit, he will ſweetly lick his fingers."

Then comes the old ceremony of the introduction of the boar's head, the memory of which Wynken de Wode has preſerved.

The bore's head in hande bring I,
With garlandes gay and rosemary;
I pray you all sing merely,
Qui estis in convivio.

The bore's head, I understande,
Is the chefe servyce in this lande;
Loke wherever it be fonde,
Servite cum Cantico.

Be gladde, lords, both more and lesse,
For this ordaineth our stewarde
To cheer you all this Christmasse,
The bore's head with mustarde.

While the feaſt was going on, bearded minſtrels ſang—

Lordlings from a distant home,
To seek old Christmas are we come,
Who loves our minstrelsy?

And here unless report mis-say,
The greybeard dwells, and on this day
Keeps yearly wassel, ever gay
With festive mirth and glee.

Lordlings, list, for we tell you true,
Christmas loves the jolly crew
That cloudy care defy:
His liberal board is deftly spread
With manchet leaves and wastel bread,
His guests with fish and flesh are led,
Nor lack the stately pye.

Lordlings, it is our host's command,
And Christmas joins him hand in hand
To drain the brimming bowl;
And I'll be foremost to obey.
Then pledge me, sirs, and drink away,
For Christmas revels here to-day,
And sways without controul.
Now wassel to you all! and merry may you be,
And foul that wight befall, who drinks not health to me.

When the minſtrels had finiſhed their ſong, another voice attunes itſelf to ſing—

Now thrice welcome, Christmas, which brings us good cheer,
Minced pies and plum-porridge, good ale and strong beer;
With pig, goose, and capon, the best that may be,
So well doth the weather and our stomachs agree.
Observe how the chimneys do smoak all about:
The cooks are providing the dinner, no doubt;
But those on whose tables no victuals appear,
O may they keep Lent all the rest of the year!
With holly and ivy so green and so gay,
We deck up our houses as fresh as the day;
With bays and rosemary and lawrel compleat,

> And every one now is a king in conceit.
> But as for curmudgeons, who will not be free,
> I wish they may die on the three-legged tree.

Quaint carols, too, were ſung at Chriſtmas by ſhepherds; perhaps the moſt curious which has been preſerved is the following, from one of the famous Coventry plays. It is a ſheet of carols, headed thus: "*Chriſtus natus eſt:*" (Chriſt is born;) with a woodcut ten inches high by eight and a half inches wide, repreſenting the ſtable at Bethlehem; Chriſt in the crib, watched by the Virgin and Joſeph; ſhepherds kneeling; angels attending; a man playing on the bagpipes; a woman with a baſket of fruit on her head; a ſheep bleating, and an ox lowing on the ground; a raven croaking, and a crow cawing on the hay-rack; a cock crowing above them; and angels ſinging in the ſky. The animals have labels from their mouths, bearing Latin inſcriptions. Down the ſide of the woodcut is the following account and explanation:—

"A religious man, inventing the conceits of both birds and beaſts, drawn in the picture of our Saviour's birth, doth thus expreſs them: the cock croweth, '*Chriſtus natus eſt*' (Chriſt is born). The raven aſked, '*Quando?*' (When?) The crow replied, '*Hac nocte*' (This night). The ox cryeth out, '*Ubi? Ubi?*' (Where? Where?) The ſheep bleated out, 'Bethlehem, Bethlehem.' A voice from heaven ſounded, '*Gloria in excelſis;*' (Glory be on high!) London: printed and ſold by J. Bradford, in Little Britain, the corner houſe, over againſt the pump, 1701."

Sir Walter Scott has in the happieſt manner deſcribed the Chriſtmas of our anceſtors, in the "merrie days" of England :—

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had roll'd,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night;
On Christmas eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas eve the mass was sung:
That only night in all the year
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dress'd with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then open'd wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doff'd his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose
The lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."
All hail'd with uncontroll'd delight,
And general voice, the happy night;
That to the cottage as the crown
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall table's oaken face,
Scrubb'd till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire or lord.

Then was brought in the lusty brawn
By old blue-coated serving-man ;
Then the grim boar's-head frown'd on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell
How, when, and where the monster fell ;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassel round, in good brown bowls,
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reek'd ; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie ;
Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce,
At such high tide, her savoury goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roar'd with blithesome din ;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note and strong.
Who lists may in their murmuring see
Traces of ancient mystery ;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made,
But, oh ! what maskers, richly dight,
Can boast of bosoms half so light !
England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again :
'T was Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale,
'T was Christmas told the merriest tale ;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

It was at Chriſtmas time that the "Lord of Miſrule" held undiſputed ſway in the houſehold of the king ; and Stowe tells that,—

"In the feaſt of Chriſtmas there was in the king's houſe, whereſoever he was lodged, a lord of miſrule, or maſter of merry

diſports; and the like had they in the houſe of every nobleman of honour or good worſhip, were he ſpiritual or temporal. Amongſt the which the mayor of London, and either of the ſheriffs, had their ſeveral lords of miſrule, ever contending, without quarrel or offence, who ſhould make the rareſt paſtimes to delight the beholders. Theſe lords beginning their rule on Allhallows eve, continued the ſame till the morrow after the Feaſt of the Purification, commonly called Candlemas day. In all which ſpace there were fine and ſubtle diſguiſings, maſks, and mummeries, with playing at cards for counters, nails, and points, in every houſe, more for paſtime than for gain. Againſt the feaſt of Chriſtmas every man's houſe, as alſo the pariſh churches, were decked with holm, ivy, bays, and whatſoever the ſeaſon of the year afforded to be green."

All the changes of time have not yet effaced from the Engliſh mind the traditions of the merry Chriſtmas of our anceſtors. Still, amid the ſtruggles for exiſtence—the fierce competition of all claſſes of ſociety—the approach of Chriſtmas meets an univerſal welcome. It is the Sabbath of the year—a day of rejoicing and of happineſs. Even the priſoner's darkened cell, and the pauper's dreary abode, loſe upon this day ſomething of their wonted gloomineſs; and the rays of light that penetrate theſe wretched abodes bring with them hope and comfort to the criminal and the deſpairing ones. With Waſhington Irving we would aſk—

"Amidſt the general call to happineſs, the buſtle of the ſpirits, and the ſtir of the affections which prevail at this period, what

boſom can remain inſenſible? It is indeed the ſeaſon of regenerated feeling;—the ſeaſon for kindling not merely the fire of hoſpitality in the hall, but the genial flame of charity in the heart. The ſcene of early love again riſes green to memory beyond the ſterile waſte of years; and the idea of home, fraught with the fragrance of home-dwelling joys, reanimates the drooping ſpirit, as the Arabian breeze will ſometimes waft the freſhneſs of the diſtant fields to the weary pilgrim of the deſert."

That genial creation of Addiſon's, Sir Roger de Coverley, loved the ſeaſon of Chriſtmas right well:—

"I have often thought," he ſays, "it happens very well that Chriſtmas ſhould fall out in the middle of winter. It is the moſt dead, uncomfortable time of the year, when the poor people would ſuffer much from their poverty and cold, if they had not good cheer, warm fires, and Chriſtmas gambols to ſupport them. I love to rejoice their poor hearts at this ſeaſon, and to ſee the whole village merry in my great hall. I allow a double quantity of malt to my ſmall beer, and ſet it a running for twelve days to every one that calls for it. I have always a piece of cold beef and a mince-pie on the table, and am wonderfully pleaſed to ſee my tenants paſs away a whole evening in playing their innocent tricks and ſmutting one another."

Happy landlords! happy tenantry! ye were then no fiction. Few were the manor-houſes in England, a century or two ago, that did not preſent ſuch ſcenes at Chriſtmas time. Southey loved to recall them to his memory:—

How many hearts are happy at this hour
In England! brightly o'er the cheerful hall
Flares the heaped hearth, and friends and kindred meet,
And the glad mother round her festive board
Beholds her children, separated long
Amid the wide world's ways, assembled now,
A sight at which affection lightens up
With smiles the eye that age has long bedimm'd.
I do remember when I was a child,
How my young heart, a stranger then to care,
With transport leap'd upon this holy day,
As o'er our house, all gay with evergreens,
From friend to friend with joyful speed I ran,
Bidding a merry Christmas to them all."

And merry may our feaſts of Chriſtmas long continue, and ofttimes may Engliſh maidens ſing—

When winter nights grow long,
And winds without blow cold,
We sit in a ring round the warm wood-fire,
And listen to stories old!
And we try to look grave (as maids should be)
When the men bring in boughs of the laurel-tree.
O, the laurel, the evergreen tree!
The poets have laurels—and why not we?

How pleasant when night falls down,
And hides the wintry sun,
To see them come in to the blazing fire,
And know that their work is done;
Whilst many bring in, with laugh or rhyme,
Green branches of holly for Christmas time!
O, the holly, the bright green holly!
It tells (like a tongue) that the times are jolly.

Sometimes—(in our grave house,
Observe, this happeneth not)—
But, at times, the evergreen laurel-boughs
And the holly are all forgot!
And then! what then? why the men laugh low,
And hang up a branch of the mistletoe!
Oh brave is the laurel! and brave is the holly!
But the mistletoe banisheth melancholy!
Ah, nobody knows, nor ever shall know,
What is done under the mistletoe!

Not ſo, the maiden is not quite correct, for there are thouſands who know that—

Many a maiden's cheek is red
By lips and laughter thither led;
And fluttering bosoms come and go
Under the Druid *mistletoe.*

Oh! happy tricksome time of mirth,
Giv'n to the stars of sky and earth!
May all the best of feeling know
The custom of the *mistletoe.*

Married and single, proud and free,
Yield to the season trim with glee:
Time will not stay,—he cheats us, so—
A kiss?—'tis gone!—the *mistletoe.*

R. Clay, Printer, Bread Street Hill.

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